Three Sisters

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C. H. LYMAN

COLUMBUS, OHIO

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THREE SISTERS.

A STORY FOR THE YOUTH.

FROM THE GERMAN OF
FRAU BERTHA MATHE BY REV.
WALTER E. TRESSEL.

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C. H. LYMAN

COLUMBUS, OHIO:
LUTHERAN BOOK CONCERN.
1899.

C. H. LYMAN

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

"Three Sisters" was written by Frau Bertha Mathe, who wrote "Mathilda." It was at Frau Mathe's suggestion that the undersigned undertook this translation. "Three Sisters" has been translated into Italian by Count Uloa.

May the present work win as many friends and prove as helpful as did "Mathilda!"

WALTER E. TRESSEL.

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THREE SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

WITHOUT A HOME.

The report of the bankruptcy of the old and respectable firm of Barndorf in K...., which spread like wildfire one morning in the year 1867, created surprise, regret and consternaton among all classes of citizens. Barndorf, head of one of the most important silk-manufactories, was one of those persons who, by kindly treatment of their inferiors, by uprightness and reliability in their intercourse with their equals, by sterling worth of character, honesty and nobleness of mind, win universal affection and esteem. At first no one believed the news, but the suspension of payments and the dismissal of all the workmen left no further room for doubt.

For two days the sad catastrophe had formed the almost exclusive topic of general conversation and the subject had not yet been exhausted, when the mournful news of the sudden death of the manufacturer set the city into renewed agitation. It now became apparent how great a number of friends and admirers the deceased had and how great was the love that he had gained among his workmen and the poor of the city by his kindness, humaneness and liberality.

What will become of the three daughters, it was asked, who, raised amid wealth and splendor, are now thrown, by this change in their fortunes, upon the mercy of distant relatives? How will they, hurled from the pinnacle of happiness and position, pass

through life without great humiliation and privation? It was known that the Barndorfs had but few near relatives; further, that the girls, in the most noble and generous manner, had positively declared that they would not retain a penny of their maternal inheritance, but would turn over the unimpaired fortune to the creditors.

Barndorf's funeral occurred, according to his last will, without any attempt at pomp. Nevertheless the funeral was one of unusual magnificence on account of the extraordinary number of citizens who participated in the obsequies. High and low, young and old wished to pay the last honors to the departed. A compact mass of people filled the street in the vicinity of the house. It was no costly coffin, richly ornamented with silver, that the bearers carried forth, only beautiful wreaths of leaves and flowers adorned it, sent by friendly hands as a last token of love. It was a touching moment when the funeral procession began to move, many eyes were filled with tears. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." This word of the prophet had here been fulfilled and was called to the minds of the onlookers and echoed long after the funeral train had disappeared from view.

* * *

In a charmingly furnished room, on the third floor of the house, from which, a few days before, the father had departed forever, there sits, at the twilight hour, before a carved writing table, the oldest daughter, Leonore. The tall and slender form is enveloped in a close-fitting dress of fine, black woolen goods; the face, turned in profile toward us and supported upon one arm, reminds one, by its noble features, of the antique. A pair of blue eyes, with mysterious depths and veiled by long silken lashes, forms a wonderful contrast to the raven-black hair. The complexion,

interchangeably pale and colored with the red of the sea-shell or by the gentle shade of the rose-leaf, is so transparent and pure, that one cannot say which of the two heightens her charm the more. Leonore sits motionless for a long time; then a deep sigh heaves her breast, she throws back her head in a sudden impulse, folds with nervous haste a letter lying before her, seals it and writes in a firm hand the address. As the black sealing-wax drops upon the envelope, a hot tear rolls down the deep-pale cheek. Hastily wiping away the moisture, she speaks softly to herself, as if to encourage and calm her heart: "No weakness now; it must be, why do I waver?" and with that she presses firmly the silver seal upon the letter. "Now it is done," she adds in a trembling tone and with a sad countenance. "You, black drop, seal a resolution that annihilates the sweetest hopes, that rends a holy bond and changes the future, that lay before me so lovely in promise, into an uncertain, perhaps gloomy and joyless prospect. Must I, in the end, repent what I have just done? Perhaps! But then, who will assure me that, if I do not give this turn to my destiny, a repentance, still more full of anguish, may not, at some future day, await me? Man is the architect of his own fortune, therefore courageously and undismayedly forward!"

With these words she arose, went to the door, pulled the bell and said to the servant that entered, handing him the letter: "Attend to this immediately, John!"

"Very well, Fräulein Leonore," replied the servant respectfully and withdrew.

With her hand pressed upon her violently beating heart, Leonore hastened to the window, sank into an armchair and looked out into the moon-light night. Her soul was aroused to the highest degree; she could not resist a painful unrest as she meditated upon what she had done, for without divine counsel and without the advice of her relatives, relying upon her own judg-

ment alone, she had interfered with the progress of her life and had brought about a change that was fraught with weighty consequences. Leonore, from childhood on, had gone her own way; at an early age, a certain peculiarity in her nature and conduct became observable. She was seen to take part but seldom in the chatter and the games of her sisters and companions; as often as possible, she withdrew herself from their company in order that she might, in some retired spot, dwell upon her own thoughts or occupy herself for hours with the reading of books that would furnish food for her imagination: legends and romances. The mysterious and the noble, the chivalrous and the strong, the romantic and the fantastic exerted a bewitching influence over the girl's mind. Happily, no impure feelings gained entrance into her small world of thought: her parents watched with all strictness to keep out of her hands all pernicious literature. Leonore had thus, under faithful parental love and care, grown to the age of maidenhood, when an event occured that would for a time, place her amid new surroundings. Frau Barndorf's brother — senior counsellor in Berlin—was much concerned about the health of his wife who, in consequence of a nervous disease, had become a prey to a mental disorder. In a very urgent letter he had begged his sister and his brother-in-law to allow Leonore to make a visit of several months, he, as well as the physicians, hoping that this would prove beneficial to his wife. The letter kindled a flame of excitement in Leonore's mind. She exulted over an invitation that afforded her the near prospect of satisfying at length, in the great city, her longing after something new, interesting and romantic. Although it cost the mother much earnest thought before she would consent to intrust her daughter into strange hands, yet regard for her brother's situation and his pressing prayers conquered her scruples. She gave her permission, after long consideration, but under the

condition that Leonore, so soon as her aunt's health should begin to improve, should be restored to the parental house.

Leonore journeyed to Berlin in company with a lady well-known to the family. In a short time she wrote a letter that was full to overflowing of happiness. She felt like a daughter in her uncle's house, and was already in the midst of the social whirlpool. Foreigners, artists, actors and scholars were always accorded a hospitable reception in her uncle's house, they were attracted by the amiable family, and Leonore contributed not a little to increase the charm of this social life. Like a new star she immediately drew all eyes toward herself. Although conscious of her external high advantages and laying weight on beauty, Leonore possessed in her nature something solid, full of character, that distinguished her favorably above superficial, frivolous and coquettish girls. With respect to her future, or, better, her settlement in life, she made an exception among her many girl-friends of the same age. Thoughts of that nature were entirely foreign to her, and from what has been said the conclusion might readily be drawn that it would have proved a useless effort to attempt to conquer her heart with attentions and flattery of the usual sort. One day her uncle entered the drawing-room, holding in his hand a letter which contained an offer of marriage from an elderly gentleman of ancient nobility and enormous wealth, and whose acquaintance Leonore had but recently made. Leonore did not prevent her uncle from reading the letter word for word from beginning to end. But when he asked her to give her consent, he learned to his no small astonishment how little even the most brilliant marriage could tempt the girl's heart when that upon which her thoughts were chiefly centered did not discover itself. Leonore felt at once that this man could not realize the ideal which she carried, if even in imperfect and beclouded form, in her heart.

Moreover, the man to whom she gave her hand, should not presume to solicit for her heart in a finely worded letter, constructed strictly in accordance with conventional forms. He must either take her heart by storm, or, as Jacob of old, in order to obtain Rachel, did, woo her for seven years — she was firm in this. After this verdict, passionately delivered, her aunt burst into a hearty laugh, and her uncle had sense enough to make the best of a useless suit and to yield to the "enthusiast", as he called Leonore.

The period of three months granted by Frau Barndorf had already grown to four, and Leonore still tarried in the house of her relatives. The carnival, which promised to be especially brilliant this year, had begun, and since prominent roles had been assigned to Leonore as well as to her aunt, now restored to health and cheerfulness—such as the Princess in Goethe's Tasso, Iphigenia, Jephthah's daughter, Juliet in Shakespeare's Romeo, on account of which Leonore was overjoyed, her mother, in response to her entreaties, had been persuaded to grant an extension of the period of absence. Although for some time the mother had been sick with some disease of the lungs, which had forced her to keep to the room entirely, and finally had made it necessary for her to take her bed, and although her condition became more dangerous from day to day, yet the physician did not fear the worst, and even had great hope of an ultimate cure. But, unexpectedly, death knocked at the door of the faithful mother's heart, a hemorrhage suddenly ended her life.

The news of the beloved mother's death struck Leonore as a flash of lightning out of the clear sky. Bitter, tormenting reproaches on account of her long postponed return to the parental roof took possession of her soul and fearful tortures lay in the remembrance that on the night when a faithful mother-heart had ceased to beat, she, in gay spirits, had attended a maskball. She could not calm herself, could not pardon

herself, and resolved, in some measure at least, to atone for her wrong by withdrawing wholly from all association with even her nearest acquaintances, leaving the house but seldom and then only for so long as was indispensably necessary to the preservation of her health.

Leonore had passed three months in her self-chosen cloisterly retirement when the longing after social life and excitement again stirred within her. Her wrong no longer appeared so great, she could say that she had been without any knowledge or foreboding of her mother's condition; and had she known it, that she would undoubtedly have hastened home at once in order to catch one last glance of recognition from her who had been more dear than all else in the world. She resolved, by work and activity, as well as by development of her gifts, to honor, throughout her whole life, the memory of her mother, and, by this holy sacrifice, to make herself worthy of that mother. She had early shown talent for drawing, had often painted on wood and in the albums of her friends. But this had been rather the work of a dilettante, and her native ability had not been developed further. She would now take up again what, for a time, she had discontinued. With the energy peculiar to herself, she carried her thoughts into effect, procured the necessary material and, without further consideration, sought, through the medium of a note, the services of a young painter as instructor. "Yes, I will become a painter, an artist," she said to herself, "that is as beautiful as it is ennobling for a woman. I will devote myself wholly to this vocation." Her lively imagination pictured her future in glowing colors. She saw herself, ascending step by step, reaping universal recognition, admiration and glory.

Her purpose received full approval from uncle and aunt; only, the choice of so young a painter as

instructor did not seem altogether proper to them, but it suited Leonore's original nature and was one new link in the chain of her extravagances and therefore was judged of indulgently by the world, as was everything that she did. Oscar Wellheim — this was the name of the teacher upon whom the choice had fallen — was one of her best-liked partners in the dance and a welcome guest at her uncle's house, as well as elsewhere. But when the first hour appointed for instruction drew near, Leonore would have given much if she could have recalled her resolution. She learned, to her deep chagrin, from her uncle, that the young painter had with greatest reluctance consented to give her instructions, that she owed the attainment of her desire to her uncle's urgent and persuasive appeal. However, the arrangements could not now be altered without offending Wellheim; but Leonore resolved to use the first plausible pretext to relieve the "unwilling tutor" of his burdensome engagement. "And," she added, provoked, and with bitterness to herself, "I will break off for all time all intercourse with a man who has so deeply wounded me and who has treated me with such cold indifference."

Her injured pride determined her to meet Wellheim, in the first hour of instruction, with extreme coldness, and thus let him feel the barrier between a rich, highly honored girl of esteemed family and a poor nameless artist. But she rejected this thought as ignoble, for she was forced to concede that, when the matter was considered in the proper light, Wellheim had not been guilty of the slightest wrong towards her. Could she, dared she, reproach him because he did not love her, did not pay her court as other gentlemen did? But what was the reason for his remaining so cold and, as it were, unmoved under the charm of her beauty when all others of his sex surrendered thereto? And so she continued her fretful questioning, without

suspecting that from the first moment he beheld her, she became his ideal, which in the deepest shrine of his heart he secretly worshipped and to which with all the ardor of first love, he had been devoted; whilst he, recognizing the folly and the helplessness of this feeling, battled against it with all the energy of his firm, manly character. In the very first lesson a perfect metamorphosis took place in Leonore. The queen of balls and festivals, the clever and proud lady of the world was a shy, timid school-girl.

Sitting opposite to Wellheim, she painted with as much zeal as if she had to earn her daily bread thereby. Not for a moment did she pause in her labor, although her hand grew tired, her cheeks glowed crimson; and at Wellheim's explanations, directions in regard to the brush, the mixing of colors, etc., she made only a slight inclination of the head to indicate that she understood. She did not know how lovely, how charmingly this modest, girlish demeanor became her, how much more sweet and attractive she appeared to her silent adorer in her high-necked woolen dress than in clouds of net-lace and silk beneath the brilliant gas-light. She did not observe the expression of mournful, ardent tenderness in his eyes, when his glance was furtively raised, now and then, from a charcoal drawing which he sketched on a little table, and directed towards the pupil, for not once did she lift the long lashes that were sunk upon the canvas. So it continued for a considerable period; pupil and teacher emulated each other in their respective tasks; with the exception of some words of commendatory recognition from the latter, deep silence prevailed. Only when uncle or aunt, who went to and fro, sometimes tarried longer, did Leonore's embarrassment pass away; her formality thawed out, she participated with wonted vivacity in the conversation, the subject of which was, as a rule, art or a new picture by Wellheim. Leonore's progress

bordered on the wonderful. As all men, who go to extremes and passionately take hold of anything new, so Leonore manifested pleasure and taste for nothing else than for her easel. This was her idol at whose altar she could spend days without growing weary. The instruction periods, however, formed the chief charm of this idolatry — that is, the relation between her and her teacher, surrounded as it was by a peculiar, romantic charm. Her life from now on was directed and determined by a conquering power. This power became constantly stronger, she felt herself surrendering ever more to some sweet spell, although, with the stubbornness and the pride of her peculiar, passionate nature, she set into motion all her powers against this imperious influence. All diversions and amusements which she had, until now, enjoyed, appeared vapid and insipid to her as compared with the happiness of being near Wellheim, and this happiness increased to ravishing bliss when the sweet consciousness dawned upon her that the instructor's coldness and reserve were only a mask beneath which he concealed his glowing affection. Unerring, even if hardly noticeable signs, had revealed his feelings to her, but at the same time she had observed her own soul, and with tremulous delight she had obtained the clear consciousness that Wellheim was the embodiment of her ideal and that her heart with its warm love belonged to him. Since each was firmly resolved to conceal the real state of heart, the relation between pupil and teacher during the period of instruction and their general intercourse at the home of her uncle remained unchanged. Even the eye of the keenest observer did not discover that their hearts beat constantly more warmly for each other, that they were obliged to exercise an ever greater self-control in order to hide their strong and growing feelings under a quiet exterior. This self-imposed martyrdom might have continued forever, if a remark-

able occurrence — a bit of romance — had not made an unexpected change in their relations.

During a pleasure trip on the river Spree which Leonore, her relatives, Wellheim and a small company of intimate acquaintances took one glorious day late in September, the boat in which Leonore was seated upset owing to the carelessness of the boatman, who was in a drunken condition. Wellheim rescued her from great danger, but in doing so sustained a contusion on the head, in consequence of which he was confined to his bed for weeks. Leonore's self-control was now at an end. Firmly resolved upon rewarding Wellheim with her hand, convinced that it would not now be an unwomanly, but, on the contrary, a noble procedure, to make the first advance, she repaired one morning to the presence of her uncle and her aunt, who were at breakfast. She had a premonition that the acknowledgment of her love for Wellheim and her firm resolve to become his wife would provoke bitter opposition; but she had no fear, on the contrary, she was filled with the joy and the enthusiasm of a martyr. It would now be her duty to contend in behalf of her beloved; the more difficulties that rose before her, the greater was her joy, for each obstacle only increased the preciousness of her sacrifice. She called to mind, out of the mass of romances that she had devoured, the countless heroines whose fortunes had been similar to hers, whose lot it had been to win the loved one by determined conflict, and the memory of these examples steeled her in her purpose. She foresaw that just at this time, when a count of irreproachable ancestry was one of her most devoted admirers, the attempt would most energetically be made to oppose her inclinations and to persuade her to contract a brilliant marriage that would satisfy cold, calculating reason. The thought of the countess-title, strange to say, afforded her vanity less satisfaction than the consciousness of raising a nameless artist to her position; as a gracious fairy leading him, through

the witchery of gold, rapidly from step to step, to honor and fame; relieving him for all time of the anxiety about daily bread, this fetter that hindered the free flight of his spirit; and fulfilling his highest desire of seeing Italy with its wonderful treasures. It flattered her selfish heart to think that every mouth would soon be telling the good fortune that had come to a poor artist through his union with her; on the other hand, it would be an irritating, almost unbearable, sting, to have it said that she, the daughter of an untitled citizen, must regard it as an enviable lot, as an extraordinary preferment, to become the consort of a count. And with what glowing colors her ever busy fancy pictured the hour when she and her beloved would tread Rome's holy ground, where a Raphael, a Michael Angelo had walked and had created their master-works. There at the fountain of art Wellheim would draw inspiration, there his sleeping genius would be awakened to life, and before long his name would, perhaps, call forth as much praise as that of a Raphael. It would be her self-imposed task to become the equal of her husband in art. She would strive with all energy and with redoubled zeal to become a genuine artist; or, should her powers prove too weak for the attainment of this goal, she would bask in the sunlight of her husband's fame. Thus the subject was agitated in her little head until she had finally worked herself into a veritable ecstacy and gave herself the highest meed of praise and admiration for her nobility of soul and for her unselfish choice. In such a frame of mind, armed and equipped for the contest, she appeared before her relatives and, without any preliminary or introductory remarks, confessed her love for Wellheim. She at once besought her uncle to go immediately to the bedside of the savior of her life and announce to him the fulfillment of his most earnest desire, so long concealed within his breast. When uncle and aunt had recovered from their astonishment, which at first rendered

them speechless, they exhibited far more vehement opposition than their niece had anticipated. Both declared her resolution to be a whim, a lofty idea, which, proceeding from a momentary aberration of feeling, would die out just as rapidly as it had come. They most decidedly refused to lose further words about the matter. With stoical calmness Leonore endured the storm-burst. But when her uncle, at her request that he confirm his disapproval of her union with Wellheim by valid arguments, raised, as his main objection, the brilliant, enviable match with Count Saldoretto, who had already in unmistakable words expressed his purpose of suing for the hand of Leonore, and set forth all the advantages to be derived from such a marriage and then painted, in sharp contrast to this the pitiable lot that Wellheim had to offer, her whole being rose in a tumult of passion. Throwing back her head, she declared with a proud smile that she valued at its full worth the high honor which the count proposed to pay her, but that she would never, for the sake of these vain advantages, sell her hand — never would she, for the sake of a ducal coronet, be unfaithful to a noble man like Wellheim. Even in case her father should refuse his approval of the match, she would not, as long as she lived, give her hand to another man, no power in the world could tear out of her heart the love she bore her rescuer from death.

"I do not love the secure, gold-paved road leading to a count's castle," she had added with enthusiasm. "My spirit is like the lark that soars in the high ether, as does the eagle that builds its eyry on the steepest cliffs where it is near the sun and drinks in the purest life-giving air. And should the hunter's bullet strike me, and I, with broken wing, should plunge from my lofty home into the depths, I still would know that once, at least, I had been near the skies and had enjoyed the highest happiness, and even in death the

thought would comfort me that I did not, as the worm, crawl in the dust, but had soared aloft above the ordinary and commonplace." And then she eloquently described the depth of her affection and Wellheim's noble, glorious qualities. The impression that her words made upon the soft nature of her aunt did not escape her — she played her last trump — she condescended to entreaty — a heavy sacrifice for her pride, and this affected her relatives all the more powerfully, because they had never before heard a wish expressed by Leonore in the form of a prayer and they realized what it cost her to do this. Calling her aunt by the most tender names, she implored her not to stand in the way of her happiness, not to break her heart—for it certainly would break if she must renounce Wellheim; she appealed to her aunt's heart — for she, a member of the nobility, out of pure affection for an untitled and poor man had given him her hand, and — with this she conquered! As soon as the consent of Leonore's father was obtained — and this was not a difficult matter, for he estimated Wellheim's noble qualities higher than money and titles — Wellheim was informed of the happiness that had come to him, as it were while he slept, and the joy occasioned by this announcement no doubt contributed to his rapid recovery; for, contrary to the physician's expectations, he was in a short time able to go out for the first time, — the goal of which first trip can easily be divined. The betrothal that followed Wellheim's complete recovery naturally created a great sensation, and it turned out as Leonore had surmised and hoped: her choice received universal approval. The world, and especially the shrewd and scheming mothers, who did not feel themselves deprived by this match of a very desirable son-in-law, praised the girl's noble decision and her unselfish love. She was overwhelmed with words of flattery — only here and there a voice was lifted in censure, calling Leonore's betrothal a piece of

folly and an extravagant idea. Indifferent as to praise or blame, Leonore lived in the seventh heaven, exalted both by Wellheim's tender, unselfish, deep love, which daily manifested itself by fresh proofs, and also by the halo that her choice had formed about her head. After convention had been satisfied, calls made, congratulatory calls received, Leonore, in a state of highest bliss, visited her home, whither Wellheim would shortly follow her, so soon as he had finished the picture which he was painting by commission of his prince. Soon after her return to the paternal roof, where, by reason of her long absence, she had become almost a stranger, there came like lightning from a clear sky the day when Barndorf informed his children of the sad fact that he was bankrupt. They had not yet clearly comprehended this unexpected and sorrowful change in their hitherto happy lot, when they were called to the death-bed of their father. — We know the rest and leave Leonore to her painful reflections, in order that we may become acquainted with the remaining members of the family. In a spacious room on the main floor of the house, whose carved walnut furniture, green damask curtains and portieres gave evidence of the refined and solid taste of the owner, and which was lighted by a gas-lamp suspended from the ceiling, we find grouped about a round table three young ladies. In outward appearance they differ widely from one another. While they are engaged in writing or reading, let us observe them more closely.

Our eye is first of all attracted by a gentle, sylph-like creature reclining upon the sofa, who idly holds a book in the hand which has sunk to her side and upon whose face there is a thoughtful and dreamy expression. This is the youngest daughter, seventeen years of age, though she resembles more a child of fifteen. Any one would at once conclude from the delicate, transparent, colorless flesh, and from the

ethereal, fragile form, that she was like a beautiful flower, but retarded in her development by sickness. Even the large blue eyes, of wonderful and mysterious depth, bear an expression of suffering, and about the child-like lips pain has, thus early in life, carved fine lines which ordinarily are drawn only by the years. Walli's little face awakes astonishment, not so much on account of its perfect beauty, as on account of the indescribable gentleness and the almost heavenly peace with which it is illumined. She was the favorite of the family and had, from birth, been a child of much solicitude. Physically like a tender plant, which every breath of air threatened to destroy, she early exhitited that maturity of mind which gave her parents occasion for the fear that such a child would not long survive, but would at an early age be called away to her heavenly home. The most loving and careful attention was bestowed on this flickering flame: visible physical growth rewarded faithful parental love. Walli, from her sixth year on, developed both in body and in mind in equal measure and justified the hearts of her parents in their happiest hopes. She was seized by a severe illness shortly after her confirmation, and for a full half year was confined to her bed. At this time Frau Barndorf exhibited the first symptoms of lung trouble, which, as autumn approached, compelled her to keep her room. In order that she might be near her child day and night, Walli's bed was transferred to a room adjoining her mother's bed-chamber. Notwithstanding the scruples of the physician, who feared that Frau Barndorf, absolutely in need of rest, would be disturbed thereby, this arrangement remained unchanged, for the gentle, patient child was the dearest companion of the mother, whose sufferings were gradually growing in intensity. The child had never yet, either by complaint or by ill humor, given her the least occasion for sadness; from the hour in which Walli was permitted to exchange the bed for a reclining

chair, she became her mother's comforting angel during the heavy hours of her suffering, and later served as her most faithful nurse, so far as her own weakness permitted.

After the unexpected death of the beloved mother Walli emerged from the quiet and retirement of the sick-chamber into the lively family-circle, which was to her like a new world and in which she did not feel at home, but like a stranger. But she did not allow her internal uncomfortableness to be perceived, difficult as this was: she knew how to accommodate herself quickly to everything and everybody and to adapt herself to the unusual surroundings. Great weakness and nervousness made any regular activity impossible for her. This was a hard sacrifice for her, surrender to which required great resignation.

To Walli, the delicate, sickly hot-house plant, Gertrude, the second daughter, formed a striking contrast. She was a picture of freshest youthful bloom and most vigorous health. Her features were, it is true, not regular. A connoisseur of beauty would have pronounced the nose too short, the mouth too large, the forehead too broad. But so soon as she opened her fawn-colored, roguish eyes, and, smiling, showed the rows of dazzling-white teeth and the dimples in her cheeks, everyone declared her pretty. Her disposition corresponded to her fresh exterior. Gertrude was the most joyous and most good-natured creature, without deceit, unselfish, always willing to sacrifice herself; her sensibilities were passionate, her mind somewhat inconstant, neither pleasant nor unpleasant occurrences made a lasting impression upon her; in the same hour in which she had shed floods of tears and could have died from overwhelming sorrow, she could gaily sing: "Let life be full of joy" or "Unwelcome guests are cares."

"Oh, do not trouble me so, leave to me my light-mindedness, my best comrade on the thorny path of

life," she had one time, with humorous pathos, pleaded in self-defense, when father and mother had admonished her to be more sedate and earnest. "Who knows whether I shall not, some day, have need of my light spirits and they will render me good service — yes, who knows!" And with these words she hurried away from further admonitions.

We have yet to take notice of the governess, Juliana Vernberg, the mother's substitute, which title she had truly won by her faithfulness. The beautifully chiseled, intellectual countenance, could no longer make any claim to youthful bloom, yet possessed for those who attach higher worth to the soul than to its covering, a wonderful charm by reason of the indescribable expression of kindness and goodness that spoke forth from the large dark eyes. The dark glossy hair, smoothly combed, which framed the beautiful oval of the face, was partially concealed beneath a white cap which was tied under the chin and which reminded one of a deaconess. The form was slender, elastic, nobly symmetrical. Orphaned at an early age, she had, as Frau Barndorf's assistant in the education of her two first-born children, been received into the house, and had ever since, with commendable faithfulness, attended to her various duties in the family.

"Already nine o'clock!" exclaimed Juliana with a glance at the clock and taking her knitting out of a little basket. "Where does Leonore tarry so long! Go, Gertrude, and call her. I have important matters to discuss with you to-day."

"Oh, dear aunt," said Gertrude somewhat impatiently, "could not those matters be postponed until to-morrow? Leonore easily becomes low-spirited when she is troubled, and, besides, I do not to-day feel disposed to weighty deliberations. I am so glad that I can, for once, think of something else than our fearfully sad situation — I had entirely forgotten myself while reading this beautiful story — please let me read

it to the end!" Therewith she again bent herself over the volume.

Juliana's eyes rested momentarily, partly in reproach, partly in sympathy, upon the girl; then she said firmly: "Alas, this matter will allow of no further postponement, since the guardian will come early to-morrow morning in order to learn our determination respecting these letters which he brought me an hour ago. Your future is to be considered, Gertrude, and I think it is well worth your while to lay aside the story and take part in our deliberations."

"Ah," Gertrude unconcernedly exclaimed, shrugging her shoulders and pouting, "what need for long discussing respecting my future! I will go anywhere as assistant to the lady of the house. Such a position is soon found; that will bring me no gray hairs. Oh, who would have thought," she quickly changed to a tone of lament and sighed deeply, while she rested her head on her hand, "that we should be forced to go among strangers! To-day we were to have held the first ball — instead, these rooms even are no longer our own. O, our fate is a fearfully hard one. Least of all did our father deserve this, all his life he did so much good, was so blameless and noble —"

Leonore's entrance interrupted this lamentation. Pale and earnest, she seated herself and said in a tired tone, pointing to the letters: "Notes of condolence?"

"No, not letters of condolence," replied Juliana, with a searching look at Leonore's countenance which showed traces of deep emotion. "This letter is from Emeline in München and this from your uncle in Berlin, who inquires at what time he may expect you. He, as well as your aunt, takes it for granted that you will return to them and remain with them until the circumstances of your affianced make your union possible. You will, no doubt, be best able yourself to send them an answer to-morrow?"

Leonore, as if in the greatest pain, pressed together her fine lips, but answered nothing.

"And this letter," continued Juliana, "is from Gertrude's god-mother, the widow of the counsellor of justice Liebenau, in Frankfurt. She assures us all, in her somewhat formal, cool manner, of her sympathy, and offers a shelter to her god-child."

"Well, that is magnanimous," exclaimed Gertrude with big eyes, turning up her little nose in surprise; "I had never believed this god-mother, whom I always represented to myself as a hag, capable of making such an offer. Pooh! who would have prophesied that I should some day eat the bread bestowed by others' favor," she sighed, with a serio-comic mien.

"Her offer is a proof of generosity for which we ought to be very thankful," said Juliana, not noticing Gertrude's remark, while she again unfolded the god-mother's letter. "She writes among other things: 'Gertrude shall be treated as is my daughter Olga.' It is the wish and will of the guardian that you accept this friendly invitation, child," concluded Juliana in a loving tone.

"But I do not wish to eat this lady's bread of charity," Gertrude impetuously burst forth. "I would rather a thousand times become a cook; for that I have some gift and that is more honorable than to be fed by charity."

"You do not eat the bread of charity," Juliana rejoined somewhat sharply; "of such a thing there can be no thought; for, on the contrary, you will be able to make yourself so useful, that the cost to which your god-mother will be put on your account will be fully balanced. So write to her to-morrow that you will, with a thankful heart, accept her invitation. You and Leonore are thus sheltered and provided for and our sweet Walli—"

"The useless thing," Walli interrupted with a sorrowful smile, "upon whom will this burden fall?"

"A burden, Walli?" said Juliana in a tone of gentle reproach; "a burden to no one." And, seating herself beside Walli, she drew the girl's head with motherly tenderness to her breast and added lovingly, while she stroked the golden locks from the forehead: "You shall be somebody's joy, light and pleasure, you shall be everything to somebody who stands all alone in life, to one who has neither parents nor brothers and sisters. Do you know who this somebody is? It is I! Do you think that life will be bearable with me?"

"Endure life with you? O, how very good you are!" cried Walli, and in a passion of joy and thankfulness nestled her little head on Juliana's breast. "How secure I shall feel in your loving protection, but —" she laid her little hand on her cheek and said thoughtfully, "but — how can this be done? You, so poor yourself and without a home—an orphan and—"

"And as poor as we," completed Juliana, smiling, when Walli hesitated. "But, I am not so very poor, after all, for I have laid aside the whole salary paid me by your father. With this small capital I will lay the foundation of a home: it will cover the cost of furnishing and renting a modest dwelling and will supply us two with an abundance of food for a long, long time. Then I intend, in order that I may be assured of a livelihood, to give instruction on the piano — to become a teacher. What do you girls say to this plan?"

"That it is very, very beautiful," Walli hastily took up the word, "but that I will not at all approve of it, because you are sacrificing your own welfare for my sake, without allowing this to be perceived. You desire to make a home for me, because your great heart will not give me over into the protecting care of strangers; you are giving up a secure, pleasant future, free from care, for a life full of care, toil and self-denial. For you must know," she proceeded with

twinkling eye, "Walli has penetrated your secret. A brilliant position as reader to the Princess Isenburg, with every advantage and a life-long pension has been offered you. Your child now commands you to accept this position, do you hear? And for this child" — she folded her thin white hands and looked with clear, unfaltering eye at one after the other — "in God's great house a little nook will be found. I trustingly place my future in the hands of the Father of the orphans," she concluded in a cheerful, confident tone, as if this little place had already been found.

A deep silence ensued. All were affected by Walli's resignation and trust in God. Then Juliana said, lending a jesting ring to her voice:

"I cannot obey your high command, dear Walli, for — the honorable offer has already been declined — the position is already occupied. Do not struggle any longer against accepting the home which God offers you through me."

"Well, if you must absolutely have me, then take me —" exclaimed Walli, half laughing, half crying, and threw herself on Juliana's breast. "I can never reward you for your great sacrifice — may God cause the richest blessing to redound to you from this!"

In deep emotion they clung to each other. Finally Juliana said, turning to Gertrude and Leonore:

"The most important thing has now been arranged — your future has been clearly determined, so far as this lies in human power. I think, dear Lore, that you will be the first to depart: they are most anxiously awaiting you in Berlin."

"I have something else in view which will thwart the execution of this plan. But I will inform the guardian to-morrow —"

Gertrude and Walli turned eyes full of curiosity towards their sister. Juliana, in joyful expectation, inquired:

"Something else? Is your marriage to be has-

tened? Have you received good news from your betrothed?"

"You are wide of the mark, Juliana," Leonore said with a forced laugh. She visibly endeavored to hide her inner agitation by assuming a calm, even jesting tone. "On the contrary, I have resolved to enter the ranks of the old maids. Just before coming down — said farewell — to Oscar — for life. You see in me a disengaged girl!" The fine lips quivered, against her will, with suppressed pain.

"Bah, a stupid step, nonsense!" remarked Gertrude, shrugging her shoulders. But Juliana said earnestly, reproachfully:

"What does this mean, Lore? I don't understand you. How can you in this earnest, solemn hour, when we are together for the last time, jest about so holy a matter?"

"Jest?" the word came with indescribable bitterness from the delicate lips. "I was never less disposed to jest than to-day, than at this minute." Therewith she arose and walked with queenly bearing to the window and pressed her forehead upon the cold base. Juliana was instantly at her side. "Lore," she asked in uneasy, anxious agitation, laying her arm about the slender form of her foster-daughter, "did I hear aright? You do not intend to appear before the altar with Oscar to fulfill your solemn promise?"

"You heard aright, Juliana. I will not become Oscar's wife. That is my free, firm, immovable resolution," replied Leonore, coldly calm. "I *must* break my engagement — I *must* give him up."

Juliana shook her head and gently admonished: "If it is really your fixed determination to dissolve your engagement, Leonore, then this has sprung from no valid motive, but from some lofty idea, from false views. Of this I am convinced, for I know you too well. Speak, am I not right?"

"No," returned Leonore firmly, "you are not

right! My motive is valid, impartial judges would even declare it to be noble, high-spirited and unselfish. In sundering the bond that held my heart I have dealt myself a wound that will never heal — for I love Oscar with all my heart —but in renouncing him I have given him a greater proof of my deep affection than if I had remained his betrothed and had become his wife."

"O Lore, do not speak in riddles, whose solution is impossible for me. Trustingly open to me your heart. Tell me plainly the reason that moved you, without our knowledge, to take a step of such far-reaching importance," Juliana implored in violent emotion.

"Well, Juliana, I will tell you. You will understand me and will approve of my manner of procedure, of that I am convinced," said Leonore, drawing Juliana down beside her upon a divan. "When Oscar learned to know me and gave me his love, I was a rich and much-sought girl. Now I am poor and an orphan. With the loss of wealth all the glorious castles that I had in spirit erected are thrown down — as brilliant as our future formerly appeared, so dark, sad and hopeless has it now become. Instead of coming to my beloved as a good fairy, as I had pictured and dreamed, and raising him, by the help of social prestige, to honor, fame and dignity, I should now become a burden to him — instead of founding a bright and happy home for him, dull care would dwell with us and would creep forth upon us from every corner, crippling Oscar's powers. We should both be unspeakably unhappy and slowly be dragged down to ruin. O, I foresee a life that makes me shudder! My sense of duty, my whole being now resists this union as violently as I eagerly longed for it before. The lamentable change of circumstances has made our marriage an impossibility. Reason must now be heard, the voice of the heart must keep silence," she concluded pathetically.

"Your fears as to the future are empty fancies," said Juliana with mild earnestness. "With the aid of your lively fancy you construct obstacles that lack all foundation. The phantom of care about your daily bread is overthrown by the incontrovertible fact that Oscar is well on the way towards offering you in a few years, probably much sooner, if not a brilliant existence, at least one free from care. Await this time patiently; you do not need to hasten your marriage. You will be under safe and loving protection in the home of your relatives and at the same time can be near Oscar. Your uncle and aunt will certainly be intent, with still greater love, upon making your stay with them as agreeable as possible. They will try to supply, so far as this can be done, the loss of your parents."

"O that, just that I could not endure," Leonore exclaimed passionately, pressing her hands to her temples. "It would kill me to accept now from the hand of pity what was formerly granted me as my right. And then this fearful, this painful humiliation — to appear before Oscar as a poor girl, as the daughter of a bankrupt man — the world would call me pitiless — and to re-enter the circles where I was almost adored, to be regarded with contempt by those who formerly envied me — my whole being is unbalanced by these thoughts —" she added in the most violent, passionate agitation, clasping her hands together.

"Now you have betrayed yourself, Lore," said Juliana with sad earnestness. "Pride is the motive of your procedure. Not knowing yourself clearly, you regard this as a noble, great-hearted sacrifice. Your vision was dimmed," continued Juliana impressively, but heartily, when Leonore remained silent. "During these recent, sorrowful experiences you have been incapable of clear judgment. Examine, weigh everything earnestly once more, and then — arriving, as I hope, at a better understanding of these matters —

write to Oscar, recall your resolution, describe to him your struggles, the state of your soul — he will forgive you, everything will be righted again — please, do this —"

"I cannot, I cannot," cried Leonore in a sort of crazed pain, "and if you love me, torment me no longer. I am thankful for your warning; I grant that you are perhaps right, but — there is something in my soul that is stronger than my will, something that drowns the voice of reason, something that, with compelling force, hastens me relentlessly forward — something that I am not capable of resisting. Perhaps it is my evil demon, or my fate, perhaps I am predestined to extraordinary fortunes —"

"O, what false road are you journeying, how you have been blinded!" Juliana tremblingly exclaimed. "But I read in your countenance," she added with a sigh, shaking her head, "that it would be labor spent in vain to attempt to move you to a change of mind. Do, then, what you cannot help doing — only believe me, Leonore, that as certainly as the bright crescent moon now rides in the sky, so certainly will the day of repentance come. But repentance that comes too late is the 'most horrible damnation' — as a poet says."

Leonore's lips curled with a proud smile. Lifting her beautiful, noble head, as if conscious of victory, she replied: "Repentance will *not* come. What man *wills*, that he can do. I *will* to attain the goal that I have set before me, and I shall attain it."

"And what goal is that?" asked Juliana, with an expectant glance towards Leonore.

"To earn my bread by my own efforts, that is, I shall become a companion to some one," answered Leonore, calm, and crossing her arms. "As a companion a most agreeable life opens out before me; I shall see the world and learn to know men. Such

diversion is, at the same time, the best and only alleviation for my deep pain; it is a Lethe, whence I shall quaff oblivion of my lost happiness. A suitable position, satisfying my every wish, has already been found," she concluded with a ring of triumph in her voice.

"Well, you empty a whole cornucopia of surprises and wonders upon us," Gertrude mockingly said and made a wry mouth.

"How did you find this position?" Juliana asked, astonished. "And why do you shroud this matter in mysterious darkness? Have you lost your confidence in me?" she added in a painful, reproachful voice.

"O certainly not, best Juliana," Leonore quickly and warmly replied. "Only, I was convinced that the announcement of my purpose would have called forth useless clashing; therefore I held it to be more prudent that I act independently — and to inform you when the matter was an accomplished fact. A friend of mine in Berlin wrote to me that Lady Doningdale sought a companion for her daughter. I offered myself and was engaged under the most brilliant conditions. The Doningdales belong to the first nobility of England. I will give you the Lady's letter to-morrow; that will remove every care from your heart."

"That will never be the case," said Juliana earnestly and sadly, shaking her head.

"I only wonder," said Walli gently, "whence Leonore gets the strength, with such calmness, without wavering or faltering, to give up everything that is dear to her heart. Has it not cost you a bitter struggle, Lore?"

A painful quiver of the fine lips gave the clearest answer. Then Leonore spoke harshly: "Cost me a struggle? What a question! If that were not the case, I should have no heart. The calm that I now manifest is only the consequence of severe spiritual

conflict. But now, since I have won and have paid dearly for the victory, I say with Goethe:

'Faint-hearted purpose,
Anxious repining,
Never make free,
No mis'ry remove.
Bidding defiance
To every power,
Always unyielding,
Mightily striving,
Call on the gods to uphold you in fight!' "

"Sister, you rouse in the highest degree my astonishment, my admiration," cried Gertrude in a pathetic tone, springing up from her chair and making a deep bow before Leonore, according to the strictest rules of the dancing-master. "I always did regard you as something extraordinary, as something unique. I always willingly conceded to you preeminence in spiritual and physical endowments, but my feelings at this moment verge on reverence—on adoration. You surpass the mother of the Gracchi in strength of soul! But I have a proposition to make you," she proceeded mischievously, seating herself again on her chair. "Do you know what? Let us agree upon an exchange: You give me a bit of your firm will-power and I will give you some of my light and joyful spirit. Then we can surely not fail of making our way through the world." Whereupon she laughed brightly and snapped her fingers.

"Even without the safe staff of faith, Gertrude?" Juliana inquired impressively.

"Ah, dearest aunt," said Gertrude, somewhat embarassed by this question, "I would not just say that. For great and important events, such as death, faith is no doubt the safest support. Under such circumstances I will certainly take my refuge in God. I am

religious, I pray regularly, twice each day; but I can never believe that our dear God has time to concern Himself about the first peep into the world of a little fish, such as I, or to send His holy angels to guard me. No, no," she laughed, "that would be to require too much of the divine Sovereign."

"O no," Juliana replied with gentle earnestness. "'Nothing happens without God,' says Euripides, and in the Holy Scriptures we read: 'Not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father.' Gertrude, believe me, when storms roar round your life's boat and threaten to overwhelm it in the deep — and no man is spared these storms, not even you and Lore — then lightness of heart, firmness of will, one's own strength prove to be miserable weapons. Faith alone makes us victors, saves us from ruin.

> 'Tis faith in God that makes us strong:
> By faith we conquer all the world.'"

* * * * *

It was the eve of the day on which the orphaned daughters must leave for ever the paternal house. In the same room in which we met them and Juliana for the first time, we find them gathered for the last time, grouped about the round table, which, besides a few chairs, is the only furniture left in the room. The appearance of the room — lately so beautiful and homelike — has changed. An uncomfortable, almost dismal, emptiness and disorder prevail. The walls are bared of every adornment, the damask curtains have been removed from the windows. The auction took place here. Both from their own impulse and also in the conviction that they were acting in accordance with the spirit of their honorable father, the girls had unanimously declared, as before mentioned, that they would turn over the property inherited from their mother into the hands of the creditors. All the cred-

itors were satisfied by this noble procedure. Even the mother's jewels, bequeathed to the children by the testament of the deceased, had to-day been sold under the hammer and had passed into the possession of a rich manufacturer. The pale faces of the girls and the deep, earnest expression on Juliana's countenance testified to the pain which this last day had brought them, and, strangely, Leonore's countenance showed the deepest traces of pain. For several days a peculiar restlessness had taken possession of her. With the approach of the hour when she must part from the paternal home and from everything that was dear to her, she had suddenly realized to its full extent the far-reaching influence of the resolution formed in an hour of false and passionate emotion and executed in the first stress of passionate impulse — destroying the bridge between the past and the present, breaking with everything that lay behind. Doubts as to her course had suddenly arisen; the question: Have you really acted rightly? followed and tormented her day and night; while the voice of conscience cried out loudly in admonition: "No, you have been guilty of a great wrong; you have broken faith, but a breach of faith is a sin, for it occasions the deepest pain to him against whom it is committed, it robs him of everything that makes life precious: happiness and trust, it destroys his hope."

But in addition — and this was her severest punishment — she became conscious of the full worth of that which she had possessed and now had forfeited. In fearful contrast to the quiet happiness which had beckoned to her as wife of a faithful husband, the future loomed before her gloomy, joyless, like a starless night. And then this sudden, growing, nameless longing after the beloved, which struggled in her and which increased to the point of unbearableness, which drove hot floods of tears from her eyes, and shook her breast with convulsive sobs! No eye, except the eye

of God, had seen how she had kneeled beside her bed and buried her head in the pillows in order that she might smother the cries of anguish that burst from her lips; for no one dared hear, dared know, or even suspect, that she had spent an hour of weakness, that she had battled and struggled so greatly, that she had even wavered in her resolution and asked whether she should not write to her betrothed, humbly confess her guilt and implore his forgiveness. But the moment she took up the pen, her pride prevailed over her better self. The hand dropped at her side. "No," she had firmly said to herself, "my heart shall sooner break than I shall pray for pardon; I will rather endure every torment than humbly creep to the cross." This last word had hardly died away when the servant brought her a letter. From her affianced! With fluttering breath, with trembling hand, she had torn open the envelope. Her heart seemed ready to burst. What if her beloved begged her to recall her cruel resolution? O, then all would be well — and without doubt he would beseech her to reconsider her resolution — he would never submit to the loss of his Leonore — no, that was impossible; he would fight for this precious treasure with all the might of his love — she knew him too well.

But lo — the envelope contained only a white, unwritten sheet of paper, from the folds of which a gold ring with a blazing ruby fell. It was the engagement ring which she herself had placed on the finger of her betrothed.

"Not a word of love, not a word of complaint, of farewell!" she said bitterly, in deep anguish, after she had vainly, hurriedly, in terrible agitation, sought for a single word. "He is too proud to implore; he is easily reconciled to the loss of me; he does not consider me worth a word, although I have sworn to him how greatly I suffer and that I dissolve our engagement for his welfare alone. Has he, like Juliana,

guessed the true motive of my act and been led, on this account, to despise, to condemn me?" She pressed the ring to her quivering lips. Hot tears dropped down upon it. Her glance rested a moment with unspeakable tenderness on the date which was engraved on the inner side of the ring. The most beautiful day of her life was recalled to her mind, the most precious hour of purest happiness. "Gone, forever gone," she murmured, then with a last burning kiss and a deep sigh laid the ring into a little casket. "But now useless complainings and tears must cease," she said, lifting proudly her head and continuing in a firm tone: "The joy of love has not been allotted to me — renunciation is appointed for me. Well, no vain grieving, no weak repining and dreaming; no glance backward, but always forward, fixed upon the goal!"

With these words she stepped in front of the mirror, smoothed her hair and bathed her inflamed eyes in fresh water. Assuming the most calm and indifferent expression possible, she descended the stair to the sitting-room, where she found Juliana about to open a plain box, made of maple wood, with a little key attached to her key-ring.

"I have something here for each of you who are about to go forth among strangers, dear children," said Juliana, turning to Leonore as she entered, and threw back the lid. "They are tokens of your blessed mother, which have received, by daily use through a long period of years, a priceless value. This ring," she continued, removing a golden ring, with one brilliant, from its covering of cotton, "the dear mother wore until a short time before her death. I received it from her hand and she expressed the wish that I give it to you, Lore, at some important turning point in your life. Take it," she said earnestly, handing the ring to Leonore, "and never cast it aside and fulfill your mother's prayer; never to do anything of which you must blush for shame."

Visibly affected, Leonore thrust the little ring upon her finger and said quietly: "From any such act my pride shall ever preserve me." "Your mother's journal," Juliana commenced again, handing a book, simply bound, to Gertrude, "is intended for you, Gertrude. Hold it in honor. It contains a treasury of golden truths, it is full of the most lofty sentiments and thoughts. You will find therein counsel, comfort, encouragement for every situation of life —"

"If I have need of these," said Gertrude, "I shall certainly, and gladly, turn to this book," and touched it with her lips.

The near-by church-clock at this moment announced, with its brazen tongue, the eleventh hour.

"Eleven," said Juliana in a significant tone, "let us now go to rest, children. To-night we lie down to rest for the last time under this roof. But I hope that our paths, though now they part, will sooner or later meet again. From to-day on you are homeless, but you will always find with me a refuge and shelter, if ever you should have need of one, a place where you will, at any hour, be heartily welcome.

Overpowered with emotion, Leonore and Gertrude threw themselves on the breast of their faithful governess. It was a profoundly impressive moment, in which once again all the suffering, all the sorrows of the recent weeks, all the losses sustained, were concentrated in one awful woe, and rushed with all fury upon their hearts. Speechless, Juliana and her foster-daughters once more clasped hands. With an expression of silent and yet eloquent entreaty Juliana looked once more into the eyes of the oldest — Leonore read the mute, but earnest, prayer: "Repent, it is not yet too late" — but she sunk the black lashes as her only answer and hurried out of the door.

CHAPTER II.

LEAVING HOME.

The first snow-flakes were whirling against the window-panes, when, early the following morning, a carriage drew up before the house to carry Leonore and Gertrude to the depot. The guardian was to accompany them to the station, whilst Juliana and Walli remained behind until the carriage should return to convey them to their new home. Leonore was very pale; but this paleness, relieved by the small crepe hat, became her well, and the costly sable fur trimming on the cashmere cloak — a gift from her uncle — gave her a princely appearance. Gertrude made, beside her, the impression that she was a pretty chambermaid. The brown eyes looked saucy, happy and bright — that her light temperament could help her out under all circumstances seemed now to be confirmed. Her little face glowed under the influence of the travelling fever. Travelling was something new to Gertrude. She had never been beyond the immediate neighborhood of her native city. Anticipation, which was so strong within her, as well as a certain feeling of relief at leaving the uninhabitable, melancholy parental roof for a new and active life, had restored to her whole being its usual expression of thoughtless youth. She had made good her right to the title, "Little housemother," for she had thought of their material wants and had provided so that they might suffer no hunger on the journey. To the astonishment of all, she dragged along two well-filled travelling-satchels, one of which — that belonging to Leonore — was stuffed to overflowing with rolls and bottles, some of which impudently protruded their necks, so that the lock would not close, on which account the satchel was bound with a thick cord.

As Gertrude handed Leonore her satchel, the latter cast a contemptuous glance upon it and said, with a repelling gesture:

"A genuine idea á la Gertrude — to take along a supply of food and drink for a journey. How out of place for a young girl. Take all of that stuff out again and leave nothing excepting a small smelling-bottle and a sugar-plum box. I will rather suffer hunger than eat in the railway-carriage."

"Alas for good, faithful Margaret's trouble and labor," sighed Gertrude, looking mournfully at the full satchel, "her delicate buttered rolls, her carefully reserved wine — what shall I do with it all? Bah!" she exclaimed in a firm tone, "suitable or unsuitable, I will take my full satchel and will take care of your supply as well — I will eat and drink at pleasure, even at the risk of being taken for a country bumpkin. You can appease your hunger with your good breeding, for what I care," she added mockingly.

"But why have you crammed my satchel to overflowing?" asked Leonore, buttoning her gloves.

"Out of pure kindness!" replied Gertrude in a whining voice. "But the world repays with ingratitude its benefactors," she added, hastily and in visible ill-humor unpacking the contents of Leonore's satchel and transferring it to her own. "Now," she continued as she proceeded with her task, "who knows whether somebody will not be glad for a piece of bread or a glass of our old, invigorating Bordeaux, and whether, in the course of the journey, you will not, with gnawing stomach and longing heart return to the flesh-pots of Egypt, you Mademoiselle *'comme il faut.'* I believe that when at last the world goes down to ruin Leonore will be intent on going down in good form."

All laughed and even Gertrude joined in good-naturedly, for her anger did not endure long. The humorous intermezzo had a good effect, however, for it brightened their depressed spirits, so that the parting

was comparatively easy. Juliana and Walli watched from the window the departing carriage until it had turned the corner and was lost to sight. Then Juliana drew Walli to her breast and spoke with deep emotion:

"Now, child — my child from to-day forward — it will be our turn to take leave of this dear house. May our gracious heavenly Father bless our going out, as well as our entrance into the new home."

"Amen," whispered Walli devoutly and with moist eye. And after Juliana had assisted her in dressing and had put on her own mantle and hood, she said: "Now we must say good-bye to Johann and Margaret. They are the last and most faithful servants of this house. I will call them."

But before her hand had touched the bell-rope, a door opened softly, an old wrinkled face appeared in the aperture, then a long, lean figure thrust itself through. With bowed head, with the sad look of a funeral messenger, the old coachman, the factotum of the house, approached Juliana. Close behind him, not less mournful of countenance, followed his better-half, the cook Margaret. "We wished — we should like — to make a request, a petition," stuttered Johann, whose least gift was talkativeness and eloquence. Wiping away with his coat-sleeve something from his eye that looked very much like a tear, he continued: "We should like — oh, old woman, you tell it, you always used your tongue more and can say finer words."

"Oh, what is the use of fine words," said Margaret, resolutely shoving her husband aside with her elbow and taking his place immediately in front of Juliana. "One must be plain-spoken. Yes, Fräulein Juliana," she solemnly commenced, drawing a deep breath, "as my husband just said, we want to tell you that we have decided to have a home of our own from to-day on. To serve another master would be out of the question, we have grown gray in the old service, and — when one — has had it so very good —,"

the old woman's voice assumed a peculiarly gurgling tone — "now we have rented two little rooms, with a cook-stove," she recommenced, taking a new tack — "with our savings we can get along very well the couple of years that God still grants us — but we are not used to being idle and idleness is the beginning of all crimes, but we want to go to the grave in honor — and we have therefore earnestly begged you, yes, very earnestly — to allow us to help you a little in your new house. I would do the rough work, Johann could take care of the errands. That would be good for us in two ways: we should have no idle time on our hands and none of the quarrels that come from idleness and then — we should have a chance to see you every day — I know that I could not bear it, my heart would break if — if —" Here her voice failed her and Johann, like an actor, at the cue, took up the word and said: "If I could no longer hear Fräulein Juliana's dear voice and could not see Fräulein Walli's face — that's what you wanted to say, old woman, isn't it?" he asked in triumph at his success in helping his better-half out of the mire.

"Yes, that was said from the heart, and, for a wonder, was sensible," replied Margaret, then continued with her usual self-possession: "and we pray you, Fräulein Juliana, not to expect any such sacrifice of us in our old days, but to allow us —" Johann, like a faithful comrade, stoutly and valiantly coming to Margaret's relief when her voice again threatened to fail her, concluded: "to remain your faithful servants in the future as in the past."

Juliana's and Walli's eyes shone with a tear-bedimmed radiance; both were unable for several minutes to speak. At last Juliana, shaking hands with Johann and his wife, said: "I have read in books of such faithful servants as you prove to be, but I never believed that such good, brave souls were really anywhere to be found. That you, in your honest, unselfish

intention to serve us, endeavor to make it appear as if we were bestowing a favor upon you by granting your request, increases the worth of your act. We thankfully accept your offer, without further ceremony. I can only assure you that I and Walli would have been no less painfully affected by the separation than you would have been. But — the carriage is waiting before the house, let us, until to-morrow, say adieu. We may not delay any longer, at ten o'clock the new owner will come. Margaret, help Walli down the steps. Johann, take my baggage. Juliana tarried one moment upon the topmost step after the others had descended; her tearful eyes glanced mournfully around once more — then she hurried to the carriage in which Walli was already seated.

CHAPTER III.

GERTRUDE'S FIRST LETTER.

Dear Sister and Juliana:

Here I sit in my little room, far, far away from you. For the first time since my arrival I am enjoying the benefits of undisturbed solitude, for the first I am tasting the joy of being mistress over one short free hour; otherwise I would have written sooner. It is ten o'clock. My godmother aunt dismissed me, by way of exception, an hour earlier than usual, since she felt sleepy; generally the god Morpheus avoids her couch until nearly midnight.

The journey hither was without interesting adventure and without accident — but no — what am I saying — I had an adventure that will surely make you laugh. Listen! As the ladies' coupé was full,

my guardian put me into another in which also there were only ladies and above the door of which there stood the sign: "For non-smokers." He evidently supposed that I should not be molested by the presence of men; for where is there a man who does not smoke?! The shrill whistle of the locomotive had already blown, when the guard opened the door of my coupé and a very corpulent mass, which, in its disguise of fur, cloak and neck-cloth might have been taken for some strange sort of animal, forced itself, snorting and groaning, through the opening and trod on my foot with such a terrible pressure that my pain found vent in a low cry. The fat mass did not appear to be moved to penitence by my outcry — without the usual "pardon" it plumped into its seat, and this was followed by a thud like an earthquake. The temperature of the coupé seemed too hot for this great mass — and lo! out of the great abundance of clothes there burst a well-formed, elderly man. Turning his head towards me, he surveyed me with a pair of honest eyes that were set in a very much reddened, but kindly, face. Suddenly he thrust his hand into his coat-pocket, then into his bosom pocket, and not finding what he wanted he stood up and hunted on the seat, and finally under the seat — but his search was in vain; in the meanwhile the blood dripped from his nose down over his coat. He was in a dilemma. I knew by this time that he had been hunting for his handkerchief. I took pity on him and without stopping to consider long, I gave him my cambric handkerchief. How that seemed to please him! His fat face really shone and with the most effusive words of gratitude he, without further ceremony, made use of my loan.

When his nose had stopped bleeding, he leaned back comfortably in his corner and thrust my handkerchief into his pocket. In a few minutes he was snoring like a bear. He had not yet awaked when we reached Frankfurt, although I trod several times on

his big feet; and since I could not wake him up, I alighted without my handkerchief, and the train steamed off with the present possessor. Wasn't that an adventure? I took scarcely anything of the rolls or the wine. Strange to say I had no appetite. I gave the whole contents of my satchel to a poor lady, with three children, wrapped in rags, a picture of distress and misery, whom I found perched on a rock at the station.

I could not discover my godmother, although I tightly clutched her photograph in my hand and sought with wide open eyes among the moving throng after the original. My heart threatened to collapse, I was about to cry, when suddenly a girl, poorly dressed, pressed through the crowd to my side and asked if I was Fräulein Gertrude Barndorf. I answered in the affirmative and asked who she was.

"The serving-girl of the Frau Oberjustizrätin," she curtly replied. She had been commissioned to meet me and accompany me home. The Frau Oberjustizrätin could not come on account of the cold weather; Fräulein Olga was suffering with a headache and was lying on the sofa.

This sort of reception pierced me to the heart — it seemed loveless, heartless, to send a serving-maid to meet me! I felt mortified, humbled, and the foreboding forced itself upon me that this reception was the prelude to a similar play that was to follow.

My guide seemed to have taken an oath to play the part of the silent one of Portici — not a syllable crossed her lips. As my different questions elicited only a dry "yes" and "no," I also became silent. Thus we went on for a full hour — my feet almost failed me and I began to think that my godmother's residence must be situated in the ethereal regions, when the girl stopped, in one of the remote streets, before one of the last houses, and, without looking about for me, ascended the stone-steps. I followed her like a

shadow, up four steps. In a rather poorly-lighted corridor she silently pointed to a door and then disappeared like a — ghost. But I, with heavy-beating heart, stood, shy and timid, for some minutes in front of this wall of separation, which, when it opened, I knew full well would introduce me into a new, unknown life — and, I must acknowledge, I grew anxious and fearful.

Suddenly the fateful door was thrown wide open — I stood like a surprised eavesdropper in the presence of a tall woman, whose features I could not distinguish in the twilight. She actually recoiled in terror and angrily cried out: "Who are you? Why do you frighten me so?" And when I timorously announced my name, her tone seemed hardly to be more mild as she ejaculated: "So? You? Well, why do you stand at the door like a thief? Come in." Striding into the room, into which I tremblingly followed her, she called, "Olga, here is Gertrude. Oh, I can bear anything else better than fright — I quake all over, I am almost helpless."

With these words she sank into a chair, while a slender, delicate form lifted itself from the sofa, stretched out a snow-white hand to me and with a suppressed yawn said: "So you are Gertrude? It is well that you have come, we need you very much— take a seat," she added with a motion of the hand, and she resumed her comfortable position.

I sat down without any delay, for my knees shook, whether from weariness or from the paralyzing effect of this reception, I do not know; but I assume that it was due to the latter. While my godmother put all sorts of questions to me about the journey, my luggage, and so forth, Olga arose and walked lazily to a little table for the purpose of lighting a lamp. This little task seemed very repugnant to her. She complained, in an impatient tone, of the burdensome duty that had devolved upon her of cleaning lamps. She

was tired of it. Her hands had a horrible odor of petroleum — she would immediately, on the following day, transfer this small task to me. When she had set the lamp, much the worse for wear, on the table and the not very brilliant light had begun to penetrate the gloom, we looked at each other and studied physiognomy. I possess no knowledge of human nature — but then my godmother's face did not require any such preliminary knowledge. The hard features, the gray, cold eyes and a very sharp nose, which reminds me of the aunt "with the chalk-white nose" in the "Freischütz", are infallible signs of her character. Some other time I will sketch a faithful picture of the godmother and Olga — to-day I will limit myself to a description of the first scene in the comedy, drama or tragedy, in which I take one of the parts. My face must have been very pitiful and pale, for something like sympathy spread over the hard features of my godmother's face and her tone was a degree warmer when she requested me to lay off my wraps, for I must be tired, hungry and thirsty, and she hoped that the coffee which had been saved for me would taste good.

These words banished somewhat my dejection. I drank with real pleasure the brown liquid, almost boiled away and full of sediment, which the godmother placed before me in an earthen vessel together with a cup and a small roll. My stomach, now warmed, worked beneficially on the whole organism.

I longed for sleep, as never before in my young life, and gladly followed the godmother, who, with a tallow candle in a tin holder, acted as cicerone to my sleeping apartment. To my surprise she ascended the stairs — but she could just as well have descended into the cellar, it would have been all one to me — let me only get to bed, no matter where! "Your room is on the sixth floor," said my godmother, still ascending, and gasping more and more for breath. "I

could not give you the spare-room, I must reserve that for guests. Besides, it is very pleasant and healthy up so high. I would be glad, from the bottom of my heart, to exchange with you, but climbing the stairs injures my weak breast." A story higher, and my breath would have forsaken me — but God be praised, we reached the goal before this misfortune occurred. A narrow, unpainted door opened, I entered my new home.

Oh dear aunt, beloved little sister! Like Lot's wife, hardened to a pillar of salt, I stood a moment on the threshold, my heart beat wildly in rebellion against the idea that I must live in such a room — miserable in comparison with a prison cell. The godmother read my feelings by my looks, she said sharply, and her words pierced like a two-edged sword to my very marrow: "Well, why do you stand and stare at the walls? Did you expect a 'boudoir' such as you had at home? I cannot offer you one, you must be satisfied with this. Hundreds who, like you, are *homeless,* would be glad for such a place!"

"Homeless!" At this moment — for the first time — I became conscious of the full meannng and importance of this word! "Homeless" — with such a cruel and contemptible sound, from such cold, strange lips the word was flung at me — it pierced my heart like the stroke of a dirk. My gay heart, my faithful and lusty companion, received a wound from which it has not yet recovered. But — it will recover, of that I am certain — otherwise I should not be Gertrude.

"I receive you into my home for the Lord's sake, my consciousness of having done my duty is my reward. But you dare not cause me any further vexation — I can least of all bear agitation — my anger soon boils over." With these words my godmother left me. When I found myself alone, I subjected my four-cornered abode to a severe inspection. The whitewashed walls were without the slightest orna-

ment. Not even that essential to a "ladies' boudoir," a mirror, was to be discovered. The furniture seems to be of antediluvian origin. It consists of a rickety little table, two chairs — the one without a back, the other with only three legs — and an extremely primitive bed, which might have satisfied the requirements of a Spartan. I do not understand why it is that, since taking possession of my little room, comparisons from the time before Christ's birth continualy crowd upon me — especially since I could not, at school, understand this period. For instance, as I was sitting on the hard edge of my bed, and my disconsolate eyes roved about the comfortless room, there suddenly occurred to me the theme of an essay that I had to write at school: "Scipio on the rivers of Carthage." At that time I could not realize the situation and the feelings of that hero — I can now, I seem to be a Scipio — at the same time this comparison banished my gloomy humor — I burst into a loud laugh, scolded myself for a dumb thing, because, for a mere bagatelle, I had suffered my cheerful spirits to be driven away. I stepped to my little window. The twinkling stars in the vault of heaven shone down into my heart, and the words of the great Shakespeare came into my mind,

"All places that the eye of heaven visits,
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens."

I was aroused out of a deep sleep and sweet dreams by the rough knocking of the servant girl, who called to me through the key-hole to get up, that Fräulein Olga wanted to drink her chocolate. How affecting it is, I thought, despite all my unpleasant experiences, that Olga will not breakfast without me, and I made all haste in order not to keep her waiting. I found my dumb maid of Portici at the hearth engaged in boiling a brown liquid which diffused a repulsive chicory odor. In reply to my question whether my

godmother and Olga were already at breakfast, the servant looked at me with big eyes and curtly said: "They are in bed and are waiting for the chocolate which you are expected to prepare."

"I?" exclaimed I, not believing my ears.

"Yes, who else? You are here for that," was the answer, and she pointed to the table, where two chocolate tablets lay beside a milk pitcher. How did I feel, do you suppose? ! Wounded pride at being degraded to the position of a servant, disillusion and anger struggled within me — but I conquered all these hostile powers and cooked the chocolate with stoical calmness. Was not that greatness of soul? ! When the chocolate had been stirred enough, the servant carried it into the room, while I sat down on the kitchen chair and curiously awaited the things that were to come. The girl returned and began to clean some vegetables, without taking any notice of me or of my empty stomach. Pride and anger still closed, for a time, my lips. Hunger finally forced me to ask whether my breakfast was ready. From a motion of the hand towards the fireplace and a murmured "Coffee" I divined that I might find some of this satisfying liquid if I cared to look for it. Without further ceremony I hunted what I needed for breakfast. From a long row of cups, of ancient shape and with remnants of gilt and painting, I took the only one that had a handle. After seeking in vain for rolls and sugar, I in cold blood renounced both. Without pausing to deliberate long I cut a large piece of bread and compelled myself to relish the breakfast, while I thought that hunger is the best cook, and hummed: "Your life be full of joy." The shrill noise of a bed-room bell now resounded. The servant was startled, let the potatoes which she was peeling fall, and ran into the room. She returned immediately and told me that the Frau Oberjustizrätin desired me to come to her. I found my godmother in negligee and hidden in an old woven red shawl. Her

face did not bear the light of day, the wrinkles were very pronounced and the toothless mouth — her teeth were still on the toilet table — made her look ten years older. She resembled to a hair the hag which I had formerly represented her to myself to be. Besides, her face bore a sullen expression and her voice had a snarling tone as she said:

"You seem to be a sluggard. Well, this one time I will let it pass, but from to-morrow on Olga must have her chocolate punctually at seven o'clock. This small office I intend for you, in order to introduce you gradually into the routine of household work. Apropos! Don't be so wasteful of the sugar. One lump saved each day will make three hundred and sixty-five in a year, 'but many small things make a great quantity,' as Hegel says. I hope that you will gladly make yourself useful — I indeed received you without any mercenary motives, purely from a sense of Christian obligation — you shall be regarded as my second daughter, and if it 'amuses' you to be busy sometimes in the kitchen, I will leave to you the preparation of dinner. The kitchen odor and the heat of the hearth are injurious to my little Olga, she has an extremely sensitive nervous system. And I, through tribulations and trials, with which the Lord has chastened me, have grown so weak physically that standing quickly tires me."

Seized with pity for the poor, afflicted woman, whose corpulence gave the lie to her statement, I assured her that I was ready, with all my heart, for any service and that I had no other wish than to make myself useful. She did not allow me to finish, but said: "There can be no thought of service. The duties which you are to perform for me should spring from the unselfish purpose, and should have as their only object, to make me a strong, useful member of society. At the same time this activity will prove the best remedy against home-sickness, worry and brooding over the past.

Judging by my red cheeks, I am full-blooded, and I am inclined to corpulency. A frugal, vegetable diet, therefore, is considered the most conducive to my health. On the other hand, an extra bill of fare must daily be prepared for Olga — cockerel, beefsteak and sweet food. I should like to-day to offer a proof of my skill in cooking by preparing Olga's favorite dish. Olga's future lies heavy upon my soul," she continued, in an elegiac strain with an obligato accompaniment of sighs and rolling of the eyes. "I feel that I shall soon be carried out to my last resting place. My child will then be alone. No kind godmother's house will be opened to her as there has been to you. Although I desire to depart from this vale of tears that I may be with God, yet I would gladly continue my pilgrimage so long as it may please the Lord and until a good match has been arranged for Olga."

During the afternoon I was engaged in making some changes on Olga's ball-robe. I succeeded, as dress-maker, to the satisfaction of my godmother, who tapped me on the shoulder and, in a condescending tone, gave me to understand that, since I exhibited such skill in dress-making, she would in future leave the making of her own and Olga's clothes to me. This, she informed me, would be of double advantage to me: first, I should have some regular employment, which is as necessary to a human being as air and food; secondly, I should have the consciousness that I was making myself useful, and this would relieve me of the humiliating feeling that I was a burden to her. She hoped that I would recognize how much she was concerned for my welfare. "One cannot count on thankfulness here below, the best intentions are misjudged — but our reward awaits us in heaven!" she concluded with a resigned glance toward the smoky ceiling and thereupon passed out of the door with an air of self-conscious patronage. Goose-flesh crept over me at the thought that I must daily endure the torture of listen-

ing to the godmother's idle prattle and that I must keep silence as I have done hitherto. Is not this silence a great display of heroism? Is it not harder to bear such pin-pricks — to swallow such poison without a quiver, than even to place poisonous serpents on one's bosom? I believe that I would in no respect be inferior to a Cleopatra in strength of mind, were I similarly situated. Best Juliana, are you not satisfied with Gertrude? Do you not see that her humor remains unclouded?

(Continuation of Gertrude's letter, a day later.)

Morpheus, the slumber-god, played me a trick yesterday: in the midst of the most lively gossip with my dear ones he carried me off into the kingdom of dreams. But now, as you see, I am again on solid ground. I close with the prayer: do not worry about me. My motto is "Through." Courageous and cheerful I go "through" thick and thin. I have adopted Goethe's life-rule:

"If thou wouldst build a bright life and a fair,
Then do thou not with fearful, anxious care
O'er troubles past thy mind employ:
The present must thou e'er enjoy.
No hatred of thy fellowman admit,
The future to God's hand commit."

Your

GERTRUDE CHEERFUL.

P. S. I must relate to you an extremely comical experience. This morning, about 11 o'clock, while I was in the kitchen engaged in whipping to a froth some cream for Olga's dessert, I heard a peculiar clatter. In order to learn the cause of this sound, I hastened into the hallway and almost dropped the cream in the excess of my terror, for I almost bounced into a heaven-high follower of Mars, who, saluting,

inquired whether the gracious lady of the house could be seen. I was so confused that I forgot to answer. Sophia, the servant-girl, came to my help. She requested the stranger to enter the living-room, the door of which she threw open with a violent jerk, and then, with a malicious, triumphant smile at me, returned to her potato-paring. A minute might have elapsed from the time of the war-hero's entrance, when the sleeping-room door that communicated with the kitchen was torn open as if by a hurricane and the godmother — changed into a Fury (she looked just like the Furies that are represented in my book on mythology) — stood on the threshold. Frightened, I asked if she was ill. This question unchained the anger that had been pent up by too violent emotion. She snorted out that I should save my silly questions and, instead, at once confess who had shown Herr von Wendenstein into the room. I saw Sophia grow pale. Hastily composing myself I replied that I had done so. Heavy rain-clouds were now emptied on my head. The godmother scolded me for a malicious, wicked creature, an evil spirit that destroyed the peace of her household; she accused me of having conducted the Lieutenant into the room for no other reason than that he might see Olga in negligee, because I knew that he was a suitor for her hand. Now everything that she, with so much labor, had built up was demolished, she incautiously bubbled out, having no longer any control over herself; for, as she continued, Lieutenant Wendenstein sought a thrifty woman, and now had discovered Olga in a torn, soiled negligee jacket, with uncurled hair, without paint and powder, stretched out on the sofa with a romance by Sue from the circulating library. When her anger had reached the boiling-point, the clatter of spurs drove her into hasty flight. The warrior, looking (very unnecessarily!) into the kitchen, had certainly caught a glance of the extremity of her

morning-gown! Would this not furnish charming material for a farce?

* * * *

Walli, sheltered and contented, felt unspeakably happy in the home offered to her by Juliana's generosity. Intent only on the welfare and the comfort of her adopted child, Juliana had spared no sacrifice, in order to furnish this home with every comfort. She had even secured, at the auction, many a valuable piece of furniture to which as she guessed, Walli's heart clung. Nobody knew that, in the nobleness of her heart, she had, at the last moment, given up a portion of her savings in order to satisfy a creditor: even the girls had no suspicion of this. But her store of money had, in consequence, dwindled perceptibly.

Juliana, an excellent household manager, knew exactly when the last piece of money would be paid out and the treasury would be — empty. How fill it again? This question began to disquiet her. She found, at first, no answer, and this heavy care threatened to disturb her beautiful equipoise of soul, to becloud her cheerful spirit.

At an early hour this morning Juliana is seated, with her head supported on her hand, in front of the open, almost empty, money-box.

"Ah," she says sadly to herself, "how vain are all our plans, how deceptive our hopes and calculations in this world! I had counted with such certainty on giving lessons as a source of income, and oh"— she shook her head with a mournful smile — "not a single pupil has answered my advertisements, and my other efforts to attain the desired goal have proved resultless! What shall I begin now?" She wrings her hands. "Does no gleam of light pierce the darkness?" she cries importunately, and her tearful eye glances questioningly upward. Suddenly her

pale face beams. "O thou of little faith! Does not the God of old still live? He will not forsake me, He will send help at the right time." She closes her money-box. "This is the last time that I will sit here and count and calculate. I must take other steps. I will apply, to-day yet, for the position of teacher in the new girls' boarding school, described in yesterday's paper. If my application is turned down, well, then I must seek to earn a living by manual labor."

Animated with new hope and with a brightened face she entered the adjoining bed-room, where, to her surprise, she found Walli, who, she supposed, was still in deep slumber, already dressed. She did not suspect that, in consequence of her neglect to shut the door tightly, the poor child had involuntarily been an auditor of her sighs and of her sorrowful conversation with herself.

Juliana left the house at noon in order to go to the director of the boarding-school. She had hardly closed the door behind her, when Walli gave herself up to her sorrow, no longer restraining the tears as she had done all the morning with noble bravery. "Ah," she sobbed, "how hard it is to be conscious that I am such a troublesome child, such a burden on Juliana. And how unpardonable it is in me to let myself be fed like a bird, without even asking: Aunt, have you really the means to procure the fine wines and the delicacies that taste so good? Oh, if I could earn something with my hands! But these stiff hands are good for nothing. And I have nothing that I can sell, not even a single ornament. But hold — that would be something! Did not the hair-dresser say that my locks are worth gold? I will sell them. What a happy idea!" She hastily removed the little silk cap that she wore in the morning, or occasionally during the day when she was suffering with a violent headache. The masses of hair, freed

from their fetters, flowed in gold-gleaming waves over her shoulders and breast down to her knees. Exhausted from excitement and increased pains, Walli laid her lovely head back in the soft pillows, the lids closed over the large blue eyes, she slumbered gently. Her rosy colored cheeks, surrounded by the white pillows, reminded one of Sleeping Beauty. This comparison must have forced itself upon the stranger, who, as if rooted to the spot, stood on the threshold looking with astonishment and admiration upon the sleeping girl, while he remained undecided whether to enter the room or noiselessly to withdraw. Old Margaret, who was employed with the wash in the yard, had sent him to the front door and had directed him to enter if there should be no answer to his knock. But at the moment when he started to withdraw, Walli suddenly awoke, her eyes met those of the stranger. Her cheek grew crimson, she was utterly confused at the presence of the unknown man, she tried to rise, but sank back again with a cry of pain on the sofa, while the stranger, of high and imposing stature, with noble countenance and browned face, hastily came forward, and with an elegant bow asked pardon for his intrusion, at the same time explaining the reason. Walli was in a quandary, but with charming grace and dignity she requested him to be seated, but asked to be excused from rising on account of her nervous suffering.

"I have come," said the stranger, seating himself, "for the purpose of speaking with a certain Fräulein Juliana Vernberg with respect to her giving instruction on the piano. You are certainly not Fräulein Vernberg?" he added hesitatingly, surveying Walli with a swift, but searching, glance of his dark eyes.

"No," Walli laughed childishly, "I am only Walli, that is," she corrected herself, ashamed of her naiveté, "only Juliana's — Fräulein Vernberg's —

foster child. My governess is not at home at present; but if you will have the kindness to leave your request with me, I would most conscientiously inform her at once upon her return. But perhaps I can give you the desired information?" The stranger's face rested with visible admiration on the bewitchingly lovely face of the speaker, then he added with the calm, confident air of an elegant and clever man of the world:

"Allow me first of all, Fräulein, to introduce myself. My name is Walter Günter — I am your nearest neighbor."

"You live in the next house, that glorious garden belongs to you?" Walli exclaimed with childlike surprise. "Oh, it gives me such great joy to look over there, the garden must be a paradise in summer."

"Of that I cannot judge," replied Herr Günter, "for I have never been here in mid-summer when the garden reaches the acme of its splendor. Its arrangement and the abundance of rarest plants would lead one to suppose, however, that it must be an Eldorado. I am heartily glad," he continued with winning friendliness, "that it has furnished you a pleasant prospect and entertainment; and thus I see that the garden has not been altogether useless. My Ellen does not prize its advantages, excepting the broad paths where she has famous fun trundling her hoop," he added with a smile.

"Ellen?" asked Walli, "that must be the lovely child that I have seen several times playing with a Newfoundland? I named her 'the elf of the fairy garden.'"

The American's face beamed with the satisfaction of paternal pride. With a gracious smile he said: "Will-o'-the-wisp would be a suitable name for my Ellen. I propose now to restrain somewhat her mad capers by strict regulation of her time. This is the occasion of my visit. I want her to resume her neg-

lected piano instruction. Has Fräulein Vernberg any spare time at her disposal? Could she take Ellen as a pupil?"

Walli's heart beat stormily for joy. "A pupil," she exultingly said to herself and in joyful haste she frankly answered: "O yes, certainly, her whole time is still at her disposal. As she told me to-day, no one had yet, alas! replied to her advertisements."

"Well, I am glad of that," Herr Günter said somewhat hurriedly, "that is," quickly correcting himself, "in the interest of my Ellen, for whose sake I would have regretted it if others had been ahead of me and I should have been compelled to return with my objct unattained. Fräulein Vernberg has been highly recommended to me by competent authorities."

"Oh, I am glad to hear that," said Walli, her face beaming. "Juliana well deserves such praise. Do you wish Ellen to begin at once?"

"Yes, that is my wish," Günter replied warmly. "And I further desire that my child receive instruction here: at first one hour each day, afterwards two hours—"

"That can be arranged entirely in accordance with your wishes," Walli replied in a friendly tone. "We have a piano and are always alone and undisturbed."

Herr Günter arose to depart and gave Walli his hand. Without any backwardness she laid her soft, transparent, childish little hand into his, and looking up, met with her large eyes, for a moment, the expression of warmest sympathy that proceeded from his dark, earnest eyes. A strange anxiety came upon her — blushing she withdrew her hand, nor did she glance up again until Günter had withdrawn. When the door had closed, she breathed more easily and threw back the intruding locks of hair from her hot forehead. "One hour a day, two hours later on, Oh,

what a great sum that will make!" she exclaimed joyously. "With that Juliana will surely be able to provide. But now, before she receives her first honorarium, I must assist her with the proceeds from the sale of my hair. Margaret must cut off my locks at once."

She rang a bell that stood on the table beside the sofa. Margaret did not let her wait long.

"What would Wallichen have?" she asked tenderly. "Shall I prepare a cup of chocalate? We have a new and excellent kind, bought since yesterday."

"That is a luxury," Walli said reprovingly, assuming a look of severity. "An inferior grade would have done equally well. You should not allow Juliana, following the promptings of her good heart, to spend money beyond her means. To what will that lead? To increasingly greater cares! But I will not multiply her troubles, she has enough of these as I now know quite well. Light has dawned upon me. And you, bad one, are in the conspiracy with Juliana. You too have agreed to keep me under the foolish illusion that we have plenty of everything. I will pardon you your great wrong if you, without any contradiction, will show me a favor. See, this luxuriant abundance of hair has long since become a burden to me. Without a doubt this heavy weight of hair is in part the cause of my almost unendurable headaches. And, besides, it makes me insupportably warm. Now I want you to cut off my locks."

Margaret clasped her hands. "Cut off your hair? This most beautiful ornament, this gorgeous hair, of which everybody says that nothing like it can be found in the whole city, on account of which all the girls envy you? Cut it off? No, you are not in earnest. You are jesting with me."

"No, I am in earnest, Margaret," affirmed Walli. "Believe me. Pray," she continued in her sweetest

tone, "take the large scissiors and cut off my hair before Juliana returns. Hurry."

"I will not do it, I cannot, it goes against my nature, I cannot even destroy an insect, not to speak of —", Margaret checked herself.

"Well," said Walli, laughingly, "I do not expect you to shed blood, be reasonable and kind and do as I tell you —"

With a sad countenance and a sigh that resembled a groan, Margaret replied: "If you absolutely require it, Wallichen, I will do it. It would be the first request that Margaret ever denied you. But I wash my hands in innocence. It is and will remain a sin to disfigure one's self so, I will maintain that until the last judgment."

Pressing her lips firmly together as if to choke down the words that demanded utterance, she took the scissiors from the small work-basket and resolutely applied herself to the disagreeable task of removing the silken locks. Walli bowed forward her beautiful head — one after another the ringlets fell to the floor, gradually forming a golden heap.

"So, now it is finished," Margaret muttered, gathering the hair into her apron with care and tenderness that belied her harsh words. Walli laid her hands on the shouders of the faithful old woman and said with emotion:

"I thank you, good soul, that you did as I asked. Now you must render me another service. You must carry these locks to the hair-dresser and — and — sell them."

"Sell them?" Margaret seemed to have lost her reason for a moment. Then light suddenly dawned upon her. "O, what a foolish goose I have been" — and she tapped her forehead. "That is why I had to cut off the hair — the headache and the heat were a pretext! O Wallichen, to make such a fool of me! But" — she laughed slyly — "I am glad that I was

thoughtful enough not to cut the hair short — even now your hair looks glorious, you are like an angel with a golden crown — but to sell the hair of my blessed master's daughter — that is hard," she sobbed.

"With the money that we shall receive from this," Walli said soothingly, "we will buy coffee, sugar, everything possible, so that our empty pantry may be filled and Aunt Juliana need have no more worry."

"I would rather go through fire," murmured Margaret; "but, for that matter, I will swallow this pill too, out of love for you."

With that she went, with a downcast look, out of the door, past Juliana who had just returned. Juliana appeared pale, exhausted; two dark red spots on her cheeks betrayed her internal agitation. Without a word beyond the usual greeting she proceeded to the door of the bed-room.

"Wait, aunt," Walli's merry command rang out. "Halt! I have something *in petto*, I had a wonderful experience during your absence —"

Juliana smiled wearily, incredulously. "At least let me lay off my hat and mantle —"

"Good, but I allow you two minutes only, longer than that I cannot keep this wonder."

Juliana returned obediently when her time was up and seated herself, with her knitting, beside Walli; more, however, as one could notice by her countenance, to please Walli than from any curiosity or desire on her own part to know the secret. "You are in a remarkably cheerful mood," she said, regarding Walli. "Now tell me your fairy-tale; it is a fairy-tale, isn't it, that you want to impose upon me?"

Walli inclined her head to one side and supported it on her hand. "Yes, perhaps you have described it correctly — it is a sort of fairy-tale," she said dreamily. "A beautiful prince from the land of the Moors appears —"

"Child!" Juliana laughed feebly.

"Child!" continued Walli indignantly. "I am not that any more. To-day I have become of age," she said with an important air, which became her charmingly. "Oh aunt," she exclaimed in a tone of irrepressible emotion, clapping her hands, "this is a day of joy — exult with me, let your face be radiant. It has been given to Walli, your child of care, to remove the burden which you have silently borne so long. Juliana, we have a pupil!"

A bright shimmer passed over Juliana's relaxed features. "A pupil?" Really? How is that? Who was here?"

"Patience, patience," Walli proceeded with provoking slowness while she feasted herself on Juliana's joyous agitation. "I will report the great event logically and at length. Listen! Aroused from sweet slumber, my eyes fell on the tall, imposing figure of a man, who, standing upon the threshold, stared at me with large glaring eyes. Suspecting a robber in the intruder, who sought my life, I was about to spring in terror to my feet — fortunately, the supposed robber all at once turns out to be —" she laughed like an uncontrollable child.

"Walli, you are like one bewitched, your 'prince' seems to have awakened you to life," Juliana cried, looking with astonishment at Walli. "But pray, tell me, who the stranger turned out to be."

Walli smiled mischievously. Then, in a mysterious tone of voice, long-drawn out, she said: "It — is — our — neighbor: his name is Walter Günter. It reminds me of 'Walther von der Vogelweide'" — a dreamy smile flitted over her little face. "I imagine that such a giant form surely —"

"But, child, whither are you wandering," Juliana said, raising her finger threateningly. "Now out with it: what brought this Walter here?"

"For the purpose — of inquiring—" Walli began, again very slowly, while a charming, roguish smile played about the small mouth — "whether Fräulein Juliana Vernberg — would be willing — to give his child — lessons on the piano. So now we have a pupil," she concluded, laughing loudly and joyfully clapping her hands.

"Oh, God be praised!" Juliana exclaimed, her gratitude overflowing. "For, ah! I made a useless trip." Folding her hands, bending her noble head she slowly, emphasizing each word, as if she had only begun to grasp in this moment the full importance of what she repeated, uttered in deepest earnestness the lines:

"If thou but suffer God to guide thee,
And hope in Him through all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength whate'er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love,
Builds on the rock that none can move."

On the following day, at the hour set by Juliana— three o'clock — Ellen Günter was brought over by her governess. The latter, a French woman, no longer very young, an interesting and striking individual, in an elegant dress, with a small fur cap on the raven black hair, measured Juliana with a searching, almost impertinent look, from head to foot. "I do not speak German," she said proudly, and then the words gushed forth in her mother-tongue. She felt constrained, she said, to bring over Ellen, her favorite, herself, in order to convince herself that Ellen would be in good care and at the same time to recommend the dear child highly to the new, wholly unknown teacher. The child was delicate and spoiled, and needed conscientious guidance and great tenderness. With a curt nod she skipped out of the door, calling

Ellen a few caressing names and throwing her a kiss with the tips of her fingers. At the threshold she turned once more, hastily; a wicked, malicious glance shot from the black eyes into the corner where Walli was resting on the sofa — then she disappeared.

Juliana had met the offensive behavior of the French governess with proud silence and cold calmness. But now a feeling of discomfort stole upon her. Like a flash the thought came into her mind: that is our enemy. From this source we are threatened with great danger.

Ellen stood mute and frightened. Her little hand tugged convulsively at a music portfolio which she carried. Hers was a slender little figure, that appeared still smaller and younger on account of the short coat that she wore. The color of her hair betokened that she was a native of some southern country. The little face resembled wax; the eyes, large and deep-black, which she now raised to Juliana, had a peculiarly anxious and searching expression.

Juliana drew the child lovingly to herself, tenderly stroked the curled hair back from the forehead, and looking kindly with her clear eyes into the little face, said in a tone that won the child's heart:

"You must not be afraid of us, Ellen. We do not want to cause you any sorrow. On the contrary, we desire to treat you with love, and to teach you to play well on the piano. You need have no anxiety, I am a patient teacher."

The shy expression vanished from the pale face as if by some witchery. The black eyes, large and full of amazement, were lifted up to Juliana. "Your voice is like my dear mamma's. She spoke to me just as you did. But since she has been in her grave, nobody, except papa, has spoken so kindly to me. I have no more fear of you. I believe that I shall learn to love you," she cried joyfully, while she con-

fidingly clung to Juliana. "You have such a good, kind face."

Suddenly her roving eyes rested on Walli. "Is that the dear girl who has locks like an angel's and about whom papa told me so much? But where are the golden locks? Mamma also had golden hair; papa says that you look very much like her."

"Has your mamma been dead long?" Walli hastily asked, in order to divert her attention from the golden locks.

"Two years," Ellen answered mournfully. "I have often cried because she did not take me along. Papa is very good to me, but not so good as mamma was."

When the piano-period was ended a firm manly step was heard and immediately afterward a loud knock. Upon Juliana's "Come in," Herr Günter entered. An expression of joyful surprise lighted up his face when he observed how tenderly and confidingly Ellen clung to the tall, slender woman, whom he at once rightly took to be the instructress. With a profound, almost reverential, bow, he said to Juliana:

"I introduce myself as your neighbor, Walter Günter, and no doubt have the honor of seeing before me Ellen's teacher?"

Juliana replied to his bow in her pleasant, but dignified manner, and said modestly:

"Yes, and I am glad that I can, after but one lesson, express to you my satisfaction at Ellen's zeal and her behavior."

"That pleases me exceedingly," said Günter in a tone whose warmth confirmed his words and giving his hand to Juliana. "But it seems to me almost like a wonder that you have succeeded in taming this stubborn little girl and to chain her down to the piano for a whole hour. No, that can not have been ac-

complished by legitimate means," he added with a smile; "until now, at least, no teacher has ever had such success."

"But no one has ever been so kind and loving to me as Fräulein Juliana, Papa," Ellen said, interrupting in a rather loud tone. But Juliana modestly said:

"What you ascribe to some wondrous influence is nothing else than my many years' experience in the training of children, my method of winning the young hearts by awaking their confidence. We must let them feel from the outset that we are filled with hearty love and with an honest wish to do them good. Will you be seated?" she added in a friendly tone, drawing up a chair.

Günter willingly complied with the request. But as he was about to sit down, he noticed Walli, who, shrouded in the shadow of the approaching twilight, had remained unobserved in her retreat on the sofa. He hastily approached her and greeted her with the heartiness of an old acquaintance. Glancing at the covering upon her head he sympathetically inquired if she felt more indisposed than usual.

Before Walli found time for reply, Ellen said poutingly:

"Papa, Walli is not so beautiful as you said. I, at least, can not see it. But that may be on account of the horrid cap on her head which conceals the long, golden locks. O Papa, ask Walli to take off her head-covering."

"No, Ellen," said Herr Günter firmly. "I will not do that, it would be rude to make such a request. Besides, it is now high time for us to go. You have surely become a burden to the ladies."

Juliana assured them that Ellen had not been burdensome, and then carefully wrapped the little girl in her velvet fur-trimmed mantle. In the meanwhile Günter stepped to the sofa, where Walli reclined,

and took leave of her with the earnest wish that her health might soon improve. Walli retreated still further into the corner of the sofa, drew her cowl still further up on her head and laying the tips of two fingers into Günter's strong right hand, briefly and with scarcely audible voice thanked him. Taking his child by the hand, Günter bowed to Juliana, and inquired with as much courtesy as if he were asking a favor:

"To-morrow I may send my Ellen over at the same hour?"

"Yes; provided that this hour is agreeable to you," Juliana amiably responded.

The steps of the departing guest and the little pupil had long since died away, yet deep silence reigned. At length Walli broke the silence. Softly, uncertainly, and as if the question cost her a struggle, she inquired:

"What impression did Herr Günter make on you, aunt?"

"Herr Günter's manner is very winning," Juliana replied after brief meditation. "He exhibits the polish of an experienced man of the world and at the same time his conversation and demeanor indicate the uprightness of an honest heart. His noble bearing gives evidence of refined training and good birth. And Ellen? Strange to say, notwithstanding her costly clothing and velvet mantle, she aroused in me a feeling of compassion and pity. She is famishing for want of the highest happiness: a mother's love. But tell me, child, why did you not comply with Ellen's request and show you her locks? That was not nice in you. Now down with that hideous covering," she laughingly commanded, meanwhile pulling at the strings which bound the cap under Walli's chin. Walli found herself driven into a corner — no escape. Dissimilation and resistance were of no fur-

ther avail. In a half-weeping, half-laughing tone, she cried out: "Ah, Juliana, even had I wished I could not have fulfilled Ellen's wish, for — for — my locks are gone." Removing the covering, she inclined the lovely head, like a criminal that awaits sentence. Hardly trusting her eyes and ears, Juliana stared at the little head, which seemed to her more charming and bewitching than ever. No rebuke passed her lips, for, like a flash, the full meaning of Walli's act gleamed through her mind. The supply which she had discovered in the pantry, concerning which Margaret involved herself in the most ridiculous contradictions, gave her the key to the whole matter. A long, eloquent look, which buried itself deep in Walli's eyes, rewarded Walli in abundant measure, and this hour bound the two hearts together more firmly than ever.

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER FROM LEONORE.

Worldly Castle, December 4, 186—.

Dear Aunt, Beloved Walli:

A sea separates you and me. I am seated at a writing-table which has been handed down from the times of a King Henry or Richard. It is a piece of antique furniture for which many a collector of antiquities would give half of his fortune. We have been at My Lady's ancestral castle since yesterday. This is one of those castles whose description in Walter Scott's romances always had such a wonderful and mysterious charm for me. I have been transplanted into the midst of the romantic, I am so wholly

in my element that I have not for one moment repented my resolution nor have I been troubled by home-sickness.

Since my arrival in London and my entrance into Lady Worldly's house I have not had one free hour at my disposal — the few hours excepted when, mentally fatigued, I reclined in my easy-chair in order to refresh exhausted nature. This incessant whirl has been beneficial to me. The present, with its rapid changes, has monopolized all my thinking and feeling: the memory of the past has sunk out of view as does the landscape behind thick clouds. Among the distractions and amusements that have exercised such a charm upon me as to obscure temporarily what lies behind me you must not imagine balls and fetes to have formed a part. Despite Lady Worldly's urgent requests I have, so far, taken no part in these pleasures, out of respect for the memory of my dear father. The grandest objects of Albion's capital, elevating heart and spirit, have so transported your Leonore that she has been in a state of constant feverish excitement. The Tower, with its bloody memories, especially filled me with a kind of holy awe. My ideals, Anne Boleyn and Johanna Seymour had suffered here, had wept here, and had counted the days till their cruel end. I shed tears at the thought. Before giving you a detailed description of all that I have seen, I must write of the people among whom and with whom I am now making my home. First comes the mistress of the castle, a widow. She is about thirty-six years old, a French woman and truly bewitching in appearance. She is as variable as quicksilver, fiery and active, as are all women of this nationality. She pleases me more than I can tell; she seemed to charm me from the very beginning. Let me tell you about her lovely treatment of me. She in person met me at the station and greeted me with the heartiness of an

old acquaintance. "You are welcome, you are welcome," rang out repeatedly in silvery tones from the rosy lips. As we rode through the streets with the swiftness of the wind in a carriage drawn by two dapple-gray horses, she assured me with a warmth and amiableness which at once captured my heart that she was fortunate in securing me as companion for her daughter Alix.

Suddenly the conversation ceased. The carriage stopped. The coach-door flew open. A servant in livery helped me to alight, while another, straight as an arrow, stood, like a sentry, at the portal of the palace to receive us. He preceded us up the broad stone steps, covered with costly carpets. On the topmost step stood a man in waiting to whom, so to say, we were handed over by the former. The third servant went before on tiptoe, flung open with wonderful dexterity a high folding-door, which noiselessly yielded, and planted himself, like an automaton, at the entrance. With a friendly inclination of her beautiful head the Lady called to me: "Au revoir until dinner!" and disappeared behind the mysteriously and rapidly closing wings of the door. Thereupon the servant, with a mute wave of the hand and a profound bow, showed me the way to my apartments. Upon entering these, I was most agreeably surprised. All that comfort, luxury and wealth can provide to furnish a lady's room is in evidence in lavish profusion. The elegance of my boudoir is almost excessive.

"Ah," I think, whenever I recline on my soft couch and wrap myself in the silk covers, "how enviable is the position of the rich! To be rich is to enjoy life in its truest sense, wealth is a magical key, providing us with everything that can refresh the body, rejoice heart and soul, and lead from the common to the elevated, from prose to poetry, from the material to the realm of lofty sentiment. How sweet one's

slumber in such a fairy-like, yet cozy, sleeping apartment! How I pity you who must deny yourselves every comfort and be satisfied with small, narrow, scantly furnished rooms. Ah, if Walli's delicate body could repose on my heavenly bed beneath the blue starred coverlet! I feel the quickening within me of noble feelings. When my heart is glad and filled with sunshine, when my bark rocks on the gently-heaving waves, I wish myself in possession of a home of plenty such as Fortuna had, in order that I may pour out gifts of joy upon all mortals. Then there should be no more tears, no more suffering, no more pain. The higher fate would lead me, the more richly would my spiritual talents unfold. I believe that if Providence had exalted me to the throne, there would have been no more gracious and more lovable ruler than I. You see that I am full of ecstacy and enthusiasm over the golden isle upon which my ship has been driven and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Farewell! Rejoice with me in the attainment of my happy goal!

Your Leonore.

* * * *

The life in Juliana's comfortable home grew daily more happy and more bright. Ellen was diligent and she usually remained until evening, when her father regularly called to take her home. As his visits to the home of Juliana and Walli became more and more a pleasure and his esteem for these pearls of their sex increased, so did the regard of Juliana and Walli for Günter grow. The sharpest eye would have discovered in the conduct of the American nothing else than the expression of a warm, friendly feeling, proceeding from the deepest respect for Juliana, and a kind, almost fatherly cordiality and sympathy for Walli. He had

travelled through the whole world, had met the women and the girls of all nations, had at one time been the lion in the salons of New York, but all these brilliant hot-house plants of the great metropolis paled beside the two simple, natural flowers that adorned this humble home. Never yet — excepting that golden, and all too short, period spent at the side of his dear wife — had he felt so happy and so contented, as in the modest home of his neighbors, in this atmosphere of genuine, noblest womanliness and sweetest childlikeness. No wonder, then, that, in the friendship and companionship of Günter, a new life opened out before the two women and he soon came to regard each evening as a welcome guest the approach of which he longingly awaited and that he was received with the same heartiness that he manifested.

One day Ellen did not come at the usual time. A half-hour, an hour passed; Juliana began to fear that something had happened to the child, when she entered the door. Her pale, sad face, and tear-stained eyes, immediately betrayed to Juliana the fact that something had occured. With motherly tenderness she drew the child to her breast and inquired as to the cause of her tardiness and her tears. The sound of the gentle voice had a wonderful effect on Ellen; she broke forth into convulsive sobs, threw her arms with passionate vehemence around Juliana's neck, and in scarcely intelligible, detached words, told her story: "I heard Papa talking in a loud and excited voice with Mademoiselle Juliette. I then slipped to the door of Papa's room and listened. Mademoiselle Juliette was reproaching Papa with letting her become a secondary person since I began my lessons under you. And then she added, in the greatest anger, stamping her foot on the floor that, if I was to have two governesses besides herself, she would not remain any longer: the only condition under which she would

remain was that Papa break off the instruction on the piano at once. I did not hear what Papa answered, for I was afraid of being caught and slipped away and ran to you to ask you whether you would not speak to Papa and tell him to send away this wicked person, who opens and reads his letters. O, I hate her, I hate her," added Ellen, with a fierce sparkle in her eyes and clinching her little fist. "She would separate me from you. But if I cannot come over to you any more, I will die, or I will run far, far away where Papa will never find me." Her slender form trembled from excitement, she buried her little head in Juliana's lap, as if seeking protection; but before Juliana could reply she leaped up again and cried in an anxious, pleading tone: "But you will not allow this bad governess to carry out her will?"

"Child," Juliana now said gently, yet firmly, "I do not know whether you will understand me when I tell you that I have no right to interfere in this matter, unless your father should himself seek counsel of me. It is for him to decide whether Mademoiselle Juliette shall remain and your lessons under me shall cease, or she shall go and you remain my dear pupil. The former resolution would be as painful for Walli and for me as for you."

When the piano period was ended, nobody came to take Ellen home. Therefore, when the twilight began, Juliana herself took the child as far as her father's door. When she returned and placed the lighted lamp on the table, she noticed that Walli had buried her face in her hands and was weeping. She suspected the cause of these tears and quietly withdrew into the kitchen, where she sat for a long time in the dark, lost in deep and mournful thought. Günter's well-known step in the entrance-hall tore her away from her painful thoughts. With the question rising within her: "What if he has come to tell us that he will

remove Ellen from our guardianship?" she stepped out into the dark vestibule and hastily opened the door leading into the sitting-room in order to light the way for the welcome guest and friend.

"I am a late visitor," said Günter, in a subdued tone, entering the room behind Juliana and taking his accustomed seat after heartily and as usual greeting, first Juliana and then Walli.

"Even though you come late, you are, as ever, welcome, Herr Günter," replied Juliana, who, with that disquietude which fills our hearts when bad news are expected, busied herself about the stove and strove to master her agitation before she sat down. "Why did you not come to-day at the susal hour?" she inquired with an anxious heart but in a calm tone.

"I must frankly acknowledge," answered Günter, "that I did not intend to come over to-day. I am not in a good humor, and it would surely have been much better had I kept away from your peaceful home. But when I left the house for a walk in the open air, my feet mechanically brought me hither. And now that I am here you must have patience with me and take me to-day as I am." Although the tone of voice was bright, it did not escape Juliana that the expression of countenance contrasted sharply therewith. Walli, on the other hand, was easily deceived; her sorrow and worry had disappeared under the influence of Günter's presence. She remained silent, however, and busily wound a small thread of yarn about her fingers.

"Ellen told us something to-day," Juliana began after a short silence, "which she learned through eavesdropping. I feel in duty bound to inform you that we, without any fault on our part, have received knowledge of a certain matter which you, perhaps, would have preferred to keep secret from us. She told us that Mademoiselle Juliette had demanded, as a con-

dition of her remaining with you, that Ellen's instructions under me should cease." Juliana, contrary to her custom, had spoken in a peculiarly rapid and trembling tone; her eye had remained firmly fixed on her knitting. Günter, with a look of surprise, directed a searching glance upon the pale, noble countenance, then said:

"Apart from Ellen's eavesdropping, for which she deserves a rebuke, I am rejoiced that you have learned of this occurence. Yes, the young lady had prepared a most unpleasant scene for me and succeeded in spoiling a beautiful day. I saw long since that she entertained no kindly feelings towards Ellen's new teacher, but I had not credited her with any such despicable conduct towards you, Fräulein Juliana. She had relied, up till the present time, on the wish expressed by my wife of blessed memory that she should keep faithful watch over Ellen. My wife had an angelic soul, and Juliette easily deceived her. Out of respect to my wife's last wish, I have exercised until now the patience of Job. But the measure is now full — I have furnished Mademoiselle Juliette with a large sum of money, on which she can lead a life free from care, and have given her notice to leave. She will go tomorrow!" he concluded with a sigh of relief.

"O God be praised," Walli exclaimed joyfully, "then we shall not lose Ellen."

"No," said Günter; "on the contrary, the little one, to whom you seem to have become so attached, shall be with you oftener and longer than before, provided that you are willing to enter upon a plan which I have thought out this evening." The last words were directed to Juliana.

Juliana looked up at Günter, laid her knitting in her lap and said:

"Heartily glad as I should be for Ellen to be restored to us, for I had regarded her as lost, still I

can not be perfectly content unless I have the full certainty that your resolution to dismiss the governess did not take place out of consideration for us and that you have not permitted yourself to be hurried into an act of injustice. The wish of the departed should be as sacred as an oath — only convincing proofs of the incapacity of the governess to educate Ellen, or faults of character which might prove dangerous to the child, should, according to my view of the matter, relieve one of the execution of a last wish. Examine and weigh the matter right earnestly once more, dear friend, when you are calm. Hasty action often brings bitter repentance."

"You plead against your own interest with a nobility and magnaminity of soul which I must admire: but the person in whose behalf you make your plea is wholly unworthy," Günter quietly replied. "Believe me, had not my dear wife's wish been so sacred to me, this French woman would long since have deservedly been dismissed on account of her gross defects of character, even before I held in my hands substantial proofs of her baseness. Does it suffice to tell you, Fräulein Juliana, that I surprised her in the act of breaking open my desk?"

"Is it possible?" Juliana exclaimed indignantly.

"It is certainly true," replied Günter firmly. "Moreover, she was not seeking money. Her intriguing spirit was bent on finding something of greater value—letters and papers, the loss of which would have been accompanied with graver results than would the theft of a large sum of money."

"And poor Ellen was in the hands of this person," cried Walli, full of sympathy.

"Yes, alas," said Günter earnestly. "But now she is in better hands," he smiled kindly, "and I will not withhold my plan any longer, but ask you whether you will take charge of my child throughout the whole

of each day and until I shall find a competent person for governess. Fraülein Walli might find it an agreeable occupation to review Ellen's studies with her so that she may forget nothing of what she has learned and be prepared to continue when the new governess arrives."

"O, with all my heart," cried Walli. "Your proposition satisfies a heart's desire, for now I shall no longer be wholly useless."

"And I," said Juliana cheerfully, "will undertake the office of superintendent over this large child," looking smilingly towards Walli, "and over the smaller child, Ellen."

"You have removed a stone from my heart," Günter said warmly. "I thank you with all my heart. What should I have done without your loving help? I could not send Ellen to a boarding-school; my love for her rebels against the idea of a separation from her. I could not bear life without my little darling. Her presence is as much a necessity for me as is fresh air."

With that he arose and departed, with warm and repeated assurances of his thankfulness.

CHAPTER V.

FROM GERTRUDE'S JOURNAL.

I am sitting in my little room. The aria from the "Freischütz," "All the world is now at rest," rings in my ear. All lights are extinguished, deep stillness reigns—all are asleep. But this just suits for the commencement of a journal, when one must concentrate one's thoughts. Ah, if it were not so icy cold! My hands are numb and my cell has no stove, so that the

low degree of temperature indicated by the thermometer could be raised. And if I had a stove, whence should I get the fuel? I asked my godmother if I was to have no stove. As an answer I received a long lecture on the dangers occasioned by placing stoves in the rooms of young girls. The godmother was so earnest in her assurances—and I almost believed her—that she would gladly allow me to set up a stove, but from that moment she would not be able to sleep in peace, the awful thought that I might some morning be found a corpse would rob her of rest and sleep. Beside me lies my blessed mother's diary, yellow with age. A feeling of reverence and awe stole upon me when I opened it for the first time. The lips, now speechless forever, cannot open to impart to me golden instruction, but the written word speaks to me and makes a deeper impression than—alas!—was formerly made by the spoken word.

The first golden truth reads as follows:

"Rise early, consider each day as a day for labor given you by God."

O, this admonition I can follow without effort. I am forced to rise early and my days are all workdays, and I need not stop long to consider this. If the following admonitions are equally easy, I need have no anxiety.

"Begin your day's work with devout prayer."

Ha, there I have struck a snag! I never neglect my prayer — excepting now and then, when I slept too long and must hasten to begin my day's duties. But as regards the "devotion"—I must confess that there I am wholly lacking. True devotion cannot flourish in Siberian cold. And something else disturbs my devotion—the shoemaker's boy across the street begins to whistle, even before I awake, "Ei du lieber Augustin," and keeps it up without ceasing. When I begin to pray—with all my heart—"du lieber Augustin" distracts me and draws the thoughts that

rise to God back to the earth. But I comfort myself with the thought that our dear God will not think hard of me for this, but will take the good will for the deed.

November 20.

Here I sit again in my "Happy Haven," graciously and in good season dismissed by my godmother—Olga is at the opera. I turn to my journal. It takes the place of a friend to whom one can confide everything. Chatterbox that am, I must tell what happens, if it be on paper only; otherwise it will oppress my heart. I sometimes gossip with Sophia in the morning beside the warm hearth. I learn to prize the girl more and more each day; she is honest and true—a good kernel within a rough shell. I have gained her good-will. We have formed an offensive and defensive league against "hostile powers."

December 25th.

"O golden, happy, blessed, joy-bringing Christmastime!" I cry out in an overflowing feeling of joyousness; I am so happy that I could embrace the whole world. The world is so beautiful, my heart is so gay. I feel as if I were the richest and the most favored person in all the world. I could sing out for joy, could thank the dear God for the gift of a blessed day, for my great Christmas joy, surpassing the most glorious gifts. I have found a true, dear soul. Richard, a friend of the good old days, has dropped as if from heaven. I am not alone. I enjoy a feeling of safety, of protection, which I cannot describe. * * * * The last time I saw Richard was about ten years ago, when he went with his brother to America. As children we were inseparable. When you wanted me, you endeavored to find Richard, and vice versa. You were certain to find us together somewhere, in the garden, in the play-room or in the stable. The hap-

piest time was in the summer, when we sat in an harbor covered with honeysuckle and read. Richard introduced me into the realm of legend and fable. He alone possessed the power of charming me, fickle creature, for hours at a time, whilst my teachers could not concentrate my attention on a subject for five minutes. And how good he was to me, how studious to prove his love to me by a thousand gentle attentions.

But let me describe at some length my meeting with this good old friend. Now, indeed, I have a glad experience which I can incorporate in my journal.

The godmother and Olga are spending the holidays away from home with relatives. So I have full liberty to do as I please. I resolved to go to church. After the close of the service I started for a walk, going aimlessly out of the city, and even beyond Sachsenhausen. I was unspeakably light-hearted. Whether the beautiful sermon, or the air, or the bright day, or the festival spirit exercised a special influence upon me I cannot say. My feet proved to be obedient subjects, they too seemed to be happy at being set in motion once more; but my stomach began to rebel, and I was compelled, nolens volens, to yield and direct my steps homeward. I was thoroughly chilled. This I felt especially when I entered the house; for my godmother had concealed the key to the woodhouse, and no agreeable warmth streamed forth to greet me. I had to exercise the greatest economy with the small quantity of fuel that had been left at my disposal. I lighted a small fire which barely sufficed to warm the stove and my numb hands; after this I ate my grand dinner—a thick, but rather cold, pancake, tough as leather, which Sophia had made for me, and, besides, a large piece of bread. At the moment when I had taken the last large mouthful there was a knock at the door. It was impossible to say "Come in" without the risk of being choked,

so I kept still. I was horrified to see the door open, notwithstanding this, and a young man, wholly unknown to me, muffled in fur overcoat and fur cap, like a north pole explorer, cross the threshold. Still choking on the last remnant of the tender pancake, I could not utter a word, and felt a burning crimson mount to my forehead. With a half-mischievous, half-mocking smile, the stranger looked at me out of two honest, blue eyes and, as he reached out both hands, said in a hearty, uncommonly agreeable tone:

"Well, little Olga, you need not become like a pillar of salt in my presence. Do I look like an outlaw; have you wholly forgotten me in these ten years?"

"But you have changed wonderfully," he proceeded, since I could not speak for astonishment. "I must confess that I had not held it possible for the child, with the face pale as moonshine, to develop into such a strong, blooming, genuinely German young lady." And he seemed inclined, at these words, to give me a kiss. But I bounded back, with a low cry, and hastily exclaimed: "I am not Olga, most assuredly not—" "Not?" he asked, puzzled. "Pray, who are you then?"

"Gertrude," I answered, and I was on the point of adding: the god-child and the distant relative of the Frau Justizrätin; but the strict command of the god-mother that I should tell nobody of the relationship opportunely occurred to me and sealed my tongue.

"Probably a relative of the family?" the stranger asked in a tone indicating his interest. I did not want to lie, I did not dare to tell the truth, and my poor intellect could not easily devise an evasive answer, and so I came to stammer out something very simple: "I really do not really know who or what I —" "Am" was cut off by a loud peal of laughter. Without feeling in the least offended, I joined in, and we had a laughing duet. O, it was most comical! After our

risibilities were to some extent subdued, the stranger seated himself without further ceremony, and, while the corners of his mouth still twitched, said: "So you don't know who you are? Well, I will tell you who I am. Custom and propriety demanded that I should have made myself known upon entering, but I was under the impression that I saw Olga before me. I am Richard Sonderberg," he said, rising and making a bow, "and I come from St. Louis, in America, and my—" O I cannot describe what a flood of emotions rose within me at mention of that name. My joy overleaped all bounds; with a loud cry I stretched out both hands to my old friend and, half laughing, half crying, I said: "I am Gertrude, and give you a thousand welcomes." He did not seem to believe his eyes and ears at first, then the truth seemed to dawn on his memory; he seemed to trace gradually in my features the child's face of long ago, and all at once, after he had gazed long into my eye, he cried out most joyously: "Yes, yes, it is you. Those dear eyes belong to Gertrude only. God greet you, Gertrude, my dear little sister, my sweet bride. You remember that when we parted we exchanged rings and promised to become husband and wife?" The words flowed in a continuous stream from his lips, until at length he grew more calm and asked me how I came to be here and how they all were at home.

Ah, how painfully it moved him to hear that our old home had been broken up, that my father was dead, for the sad news had not reached him in America. His eye rested on me with an expression of warmest sympathy, and he softly murmured: "Poor Gertrude, poor Gertrude!" Then he asked me whether I was content with my new abode, whether I had found a true home.

I wavered several minutes; it did not seem proper to make accusations against my godmother, but under the clear glance of the friend who is as dear to me

as a brother, the bolt on the door of my heart withdrew of itself. Having begun my confession, I complained to him without reserve about my petty sufferings, which, of this I am convinced, are buried in his bosom as if in a grave. Should I have deceived the good, honest man and pretended that I lay on a bed of roses? In so far this would have been better, since I could then have continued to enjoy myself in the brightness and warmth of his good spirits, which seemed to have been subdued suddenly at my narration.

After having held a cross-examination of me and having racked his brains in an effort to think of a home among kinder and more humane relatives, he said with a sigh and a shake of the head that he could not, at that moment, do anything, but upon reaching home he would consult with his father— perhaps he would be in a position to receive me into his home. Suddenly he asked if I had eaten, and when I replied in the affirmative, he required me to inform him of what my meal had consisted. He smiled compassionately and proposed that I dine with him at the Westend-Hall Hotel. — I accepted the invitation with the greatest pleasure. The thought of being seated once more at a beautifully arranged table and to partake of a well-prepared meal, had something very tempting for me; but I had a still greater desire for diversion and change, for a sight of new faces.

We took a roundabout way, and reached the hotel rather late. We ate a delicious dinner à la carte, and it was all the more glorious because seasoned with bright conversation and reminiscences of childhood days. We then took a walk until gathering twilight admonished us that it was time to go home. On entering my godmother's house, it seemed to me that I had returned to prison after a day of sweet liberty, and my heart filled with grief; my happy

spirits had suddenly given way to a feeling of forsakenness as Richard took leave of me at the house-door.

December 26th.

To-day was like yesterday; it was clear and lovely, like a bright day in May. Everything about me seemed tinged with the rosy light of Spring. It was Spring in my heart, when I walked beside my friend and ate at the same table where we had eaten the day before. Ah, I was the light-hearted Gertrude of other days and imagined that it must always remain so.

About four o'clock Richard again accompanied me home; he left me at the door with the promise that he would pay a visit to the godmother to-morrow. She was expected home on the last train to-night. Light of foot and of heart, I flew up the steps, thinking to confide the day's experience to my dear journal and in this way to have these pleasures over again. But on entering the sitting-room, the door of which, to my horror, I found standing open, my warm blood grew suddenly icy cold, as if cold water had been dashed on me—no, rather as if I had seen the Medusa head. The godmother, resembling a Nemesis, was throned on the sofa. Olga reclined in an easy-chair. The annihilating glance of this Nemesis had, however, wholly lost its former intimidating, terrifying power. Recovered from the first shock, I felt the calm of a Socrates at the draught of the poisoned cup, for I was strong in the knowledge of the protection afforded me by the friendship of Richard; his sweet words were still ringing in my ear.

"You are my little bride whom I must protect from all injury and danger — never forget that." I stood my ground, without wavering, without opening my lips in defence, under the hail of reproaches showered upon me by my godmother. When she at last

peremptorily commanded me to acknowledge where I had been, I unreservedly related to her the pleasant experiences of the last two days.

Had a bomb exploded at my godmother's feet, it could have had no more terrible effect than my harmless narrative. She turned to a pillar of salt, while I, in utter astonishment, asked myself: Why? Olga's bitter remark: "That is the result of a stupid, tedious, purposeless trip into the country," roused her mother, who made the sharp rejoinder: "The trip had been well considered and was made for your sake only. Prudence demands that every opportunity be seized in order that you may be married before you are twenty-five years of age." One word brought on another, until the disharmony ended in strife which disgusted me and drove me, in hasty flight, to my little room. The stillness up here, where I am so near the sky, did me as much good as the rest of Ash Wednesday after the carnival of Shrove Tuesday. Even if I am alone, I am not in a desert. I know a dear, true heart, not far from here, which is concerned for my welfare and will protect me from injury. It is curious! I thought that only under the stress of misfortune did men have a desire to address themselves to God. But I am urged on by some mighty power to fall on my knees and praise and thank Him for all my joy!

December 27.

This morning, while I was standing in the kitchen with meal-besprinkled hands, a heavy hand was suddenly laid on my shoulder. Turning around in terror, I looked into the mischievous eyes of Richard. He had slipped into the kitchen on his tip-toes. He would not allow me to interrupt my work: he sat down on the kitchen-chair in order to watch me, as he said, for he had an active interest in cookery. But that was only a pretence, for whenever I looked up — of course

only to keep him under restraint — my eye met his; but this would have been wholly impossible had he been watching my fingers. Once, when, almost breathless after a special effort to display my skill, I looked for some word of approval, the bad man betrayed himself by the remark: "Your hair has a much prettier color now than it formerly had." He had been blind to all my efforts and had made a study of my hair.

At the moment when Richard had risen to give me his hand before proceeding to make his reverence to the godmother, we observed that person standing on the threshold of the kitchen-door. The expression of her face was as mild as moonlight, and in a voice as soft as the tones of a flute, affecting astonishment, deep emotion, joy and rapture in a masterly manner, she exclaimed: "O my dear, dear Richard, is it really you? What a joyful surprise, what unexpected happiness you have given me by this visit!" And extending her arms she drew with gentle force the startled Richard to her bosom. Then releasing him, she readjusted her spectacles, which had been disarranged by the embrace, and set her cap straight over the meagre, unkempt hair: "But you must now hasten into the sitting-room to Olga. What a joy this will be for the good child, who is constantly thinking of her dear cousin and is always speaking of him and of the happy days of old." Therewith she took the good man by the arm and led him away, even before he had opportunity to say one word in reply.

After the lapse of nearly a quarter of an hour the godmother called me into the room. Richard sat beside Olga. He was holding some yarn while she wound it and they were laughing and jesting; my heart was strangely agitated and my eyes grew dim. My godmother, in the most loving manner — in the form of a request — commissioned me to go to the apothecary's in order to have a prescription filled.

The medicine must be procured immediately: it was intended for a protegé of hers who was poor and dangerously ill.

I was confused. I must have made a fearfully stupid appearance just then. I did not recognize Olga any more: she seemed to glow with new life. I saw from Richard's wondering gaze that I should be eclipsed totally by her. It was not envy, most certainly not, which made me so unspeakably comfortless, so hopeless: it was a feeling which I can not properly describe, a sort of anxiety about Richard, as if he stood on the brink of a precipice and were about to plunge into it headlong!

Richard remained to dinner. When I carried in the soup, the godmother, turning to Richard, informed him that she let me perform such service for the mere purpose of gradually developing me into a capable housewife, such as her Olga already was. "Ah yes," Olga interjected, "mamma was my patient instructress. I must frankly acknowledge that I passed through this school of discipline with extreme reluctance, but I now recognize with a thankful heart the benefits of such a training for a girl. How helpless would one be, if, for instance, forced to go among strangers and —," as if frightened, she paused, glanced at me and bit her lips. Painful silence prevailed for a moment, but Richard came to the rescue with the remark: "It would be fortunate for the world, especially for the men, if all girls shared Olga's practical views and prepared themselves for good housewives instead of for drawing-room ladies. Men do not seek a dancing, singing, declaiming or poetizing doll-baby for a life's companion," he continued, but a housewife such as Schiller has described in so masterly a manner in his "Lay of the Bell." Then, with his bright eyes resting on me, and with glowing face, he recited:

"And within the modest housewife holds sway,
Ruling all wisely,
Teaching her daughters,
Restraining the boys," etc.

"You girls know that as well as I do," he said, and turning to me, added with a mischievous twinkle in his eye: "Do you know, Gertrude, while we are talking about The Bell, which passage suits us two famously?"

I could not think at once, for I was so confused by Richard's glowing look that I could not have recalled, at that moment, a single strophe of the poem. Olga bit her lips, the god-mother coughed as if a bone stuck in her throat. Richard ignored all that and lifting his glass high, recited:

"The youth, in pride, tears away from the maiden,
Rushes into the storm of life,
With pilgrim-staff sets out to see the world."

When he had recited this point, the whole passage flashed into my mind. The seventeenth strophe:

"O tender longing, sweetest hope,
Golden time of earliest love,"

rapidly approached, for he spoke with increasing enthusiasm and rapidity. But it was impossible for me to hear the rest in the presence of witnesses, I should have sunk into the ground from sheer shame. My entreating eyes had no effect on the bad man, therefore I took refuge in flight. For an hour I have been sitting in my cold room and I do not know whether to cry or to laugh. My heart is wonderfully aroused, I never before experienced such feelings. I am sad even unto death, and I could leap heaven-high for joy.

January 8.

A new year has come! Will it bring me sorrow or joy? O, the blessed hope is strong within me that my thorny road will be changed into a pathway of roses.

Richard passed New Year's evening with us. A few acquaintances had been invited, but no pretty girls — no indeed, 'twould not do — only old maids!

I love Richard beyond expression. And I believe that his love for me is not less strong. I see it in a thousand ways, insignificant in themselves, but of the highest importance for a heart filled with love. His warm, eloquent glances and his hearty pressure of the hand — though it is hurried, for we, as if by common consent, conceal our feelings before the godmother and Olga; and this requires consummate skill; for both, as I clearly see, are like spies and watch us with Argus eyes — are convincing testimonies to me of his affection. But what do these two watchful women propose to do? I am certain of Richard's love and I would fight for it as the lioness fights to shield her young, should anyone seek to rob me of this treasure.

January 9.

I see quite plainly that a well-prepared plan has been adopted for the purpose of disparaging and lowering me in the eyes of Richard. Since the evening when Olga discovered one of his glowing glances directed towards me she has become a decided rival of mine. Everything that I do is criticised, but not harshly: O no! but with indescribable gentleness, with the forbearance, the patience of a tender foster-mother and a loving sister towards the faults, the mistakes and the dumb tricks of a spoiled favorite. The best of all is, that, notwithstanding all these humane, noble efforts to make me appear in Richard's eyes as

a terrible child, to degrade me to a wild goose, his love for me has not diminished, however small his regard for my abilities may be. This much was proved to me to-day by a charming bouquet which I found upon entering my harbor of refuge — and among the flowers I discovered a tiny billet upon which there was inscribed a short poem. The poem rests upon my heart, the flowers stand on the window-sill and will remain there until they wither — the fate of everything beautiful on earth. Then I will dry and press them, as girls are wont to do.

January 10.

"After rain, sunshine," is the old saying. But in my case the order is reversed to-day: after sunshine, storm, night! For a moment, to-day, I stood upon the pinnacle of joy; but now I have sunk into the abyss of despondency. When I have entered my lament in my journal, I shall open the flood-gates of the soul and give my tears free course. As I was hurrying down the steps this morning, I met Richard, who had just entered. In a moment we had clasped hands and exchanged searching glances. The creaking of a door allowed Richard time enough only to touch my forehead gently with his lips, whereupon the wicked man passed on to the sitting-room as if nothing had happened. At the threshold the godmother met him with one of her sweetest smiles. After he had departed — the reason for his early morning call I did not learn — I was cited before the high tribunal. Innocently and without misgiving, I complied with the command; but the attitude and look of the judge led me to guess that I was about to have a severe trial.

The godmother, in a coldly calm voice, bade me be seated. While her hands were employed on a frock for a little child, she began a sermon, carefully divided into three parts according to the most severe theolog-

ical rules. In the first part she declared that I must lay aside my free, unmaidenly conduct. My manner towards Richard she considered bold and unwomanly. Men — Richard not excepted — were light-minded creatures and only made sport of the girls. The second part contained the threat that any approach on my part at familiarity with Richard would render my further stay under her roof impossible. The conclusion — or the third part — directed me, whenever Richard happened to be present at tea, to leave the table as soon as I had finished my meal, excusing myself on the ground of a headache or a toothache, and to retire to my room, where, for my soul's edification, I should engage in the reading of some religious book. "I have had," she concluded with unction, "opportunity to observe that you possess a heart that is easily inflamed. If you were to meet Richard frequently, your heart would catch fire, you would at last forget what a vast difference there is between the Gertrude of former times and the poor orphan of to-day and who knows what foolishness would gain entrance into your head. It is my holy Christian duty to warn you against such silliness." Small as my power of penetration may be, I at once saw through the object of this sermon. It is to take Richard away from me and to win him for Olga.

Truly, the plan has been well laid. My coolness and reserve must be the first mesh in the net which is to catch the unsuspecting, good-hearted man, since the hope of capturing Lieutenant Wendenstein has been destroyed, for he recently sent out cards announcing his engagement. Ah, what else could I do than submit, for I am defenseless? Therefore I sit here now, solitary and alone, whilst they below are merry.

Olga served the tea with grace and charm. She dexterously interjected into the conversation a number of foreign words which she had learned from the dictionary the day before. Richard was led, by a question

put to him by Olga concerning family life in America, into a description of the conditions in that country. Sometimes I noticed, from the sound of his voice, that he was speaking to me exclusively, but I did not raise my eyes.

A significant clearing of the throat on the part of my godmother caused me to raise, for a moment, my eyelids: in that moment I caught a glance from Richard's eyes. Oh, what bitter, painful reproach I read in that glance! My heart was filled with pain, my eyes grew dim with tears. Hastily rising in order to avail myself of the moment when my head whirled and I should not be forced to speak a lie, I asked the godmother for permission to retire to my room because of a severe headache.

"Headache?" Richard exclaimed in a bitter, mocking tone; "your face glows as a fresh rose."

The godmother bent her head to one side and said in a tone of lament: "More bad humor than headache. Gertrude takes no interest in serious conversation. Her nature is too frivolous. She is a spoiled child. One must practice forbearance towards her. Go to your room, Richard will excuse you on account of your *headache*," laying peculiar emphasis on the last word. Richard laughed, but I could discover beneath his assumed gaiety a feeling of anger. As I left the room I heard him saying: "Oh, certainly, I will not detain Gertrude against her will," and then I found myself sitting on my bed, not knowing how I had come there. To-morrow, if the opportunity occurs, I will tell Richard everything; he shall not be deceived any longer, nor led to think of me as a miserable creature. Sooner or later, this I feel, my anger will burst its bounds; as Mary Stuart asserted herself over against Queen Elizabeth, so will I do over against the godmother. Ha, what a moment of triumph, what a rare pleasure, when with

the feeling of final release from the long torment of silence and forbearance, I shall be enabled to step before my godmother and say: "I want your charity no longer, I cast it at your feet!" For the sake of this moment I would willingly go begging or even sacrifice a whole year of my life. And it will come, this moment of satisfaction, I will see to that; only, so long as Richard is here I must have patience and smile at misfortune. I have just come home from a sorrowful journey. While meditating revenge I was interrupted by Sophia. Pale as death and with great trouble depicted on her countenance, she had crept up to my room to tell me that her mother was very ill. A little boy had brought her word and waited to accompany her to her mother's bedside. But the godmother had entered a decided veto against her going. Sophia was inconsolable, she wrung her hands in desperation. I sympathized with her—to know that her mother lay helpless and not to be allowed to hasten to her must have been torture. Sophia was not inclined to risk disobedience; should she incur the displeasure of the godmother, dismissal from service would stare her in the face. But dismissal would make necessary the repayment of a large sum of money which her deceased father had received, as a loan, from the late husband of the godmother. And this would be an impossibility for the widow and for Sophia; the latter is working the debt off by her service in this gloomy house.

We deliberated for some time. It at last occurred to me to go in Sophia's place. I can render good service beside the sick-bed.

How the poor girl rejoiced at the proposition! In less than five minutes I was wrapped up like a Pelznickel and in a quarter of an hour had arrived at my destination. The boy acted as guide. Sophia's mother, suffering with a broken leg, was glad to see

me. Fortunately, she was not wholly forsaken. Two neighbor-women, moved by Samaritan love, were already there and had rendered all possible service. The physician called while I was there. He is physician to the poor and is still young. His manner is kind and awakens confidence. It was eleven o'clock when I prepared to return. The doctor politely offered to escort me home. "The late hour," he said in explanation of his proffer, "was not so safe or suitable for a young lady to be alone on the street." I was heartily glad to accept his offer, for my heart had indeed been moved with fear at traveling alone and unprotected the dark streets. Near my godmother's home we met a man, wrapped from head to foot in a fur coat—he bore a most striking resemblance to Richard. He suddenly checked his rapid step, stood immediately before me and looked under my hood, which was drawn over my forehead. The physician maintained that the curious fellow remained standing for quite a while and watched us.

January 11th.

I saw Richard to-day. A single glance from the dear eyes! Can those eyes be so tender, and yet so cold? Notwithstanding the presence of the godmother and Olga, I ventured to look at Richard once more. I would at this moment not have feared hell, much less the godmother's wrath. But Richard had already engaged in a witty combat of words with Olga; he did not take the least notice of me. At seven o'clock, acting upon a quiet signal from the godmother, I left the room. I could not restrain my tears any longer. Ah, he doubts my love, he takes me to be a frivolous, superficial creature. How he must suffer on this account! The poor, dear man must not be tormented any longer by the pangs of doubt. I will deliver him from these. Sophia must

slip a letter into his hands to-morrow. By this means I will describe to him the wiles of the "enemy" and betray the hostile plan of battle.

January 12th.

It is midnight. I have just returned from Sophia's mother, who sent for me just as I was beginning the letter to Richard. The letter had to wait, for I would have considered it a wrong to keep the sick woman waiting when she so earnestly desired to see me. On account of a violent spasm it was necessary to call in the physician. It was half an hour before he could come; at sight of me he exhibited joyful surprise. After having attended to everything with his wonted precaution and calm, he again offered to accompany me home and I thankfully accepted his proffer. The journey home was made amid most unpleasant conditions. Heaven had opened all its flood-gates and mercilessly poured down on us, poor mortals, a cold bath. When we were near the godmother's house, the doctor, with a touch of humor, remarked that this trip would be placed doubly to my account in heaven's book. He opened the house-door for me and, giving me his hand, inquired whether I would visit the sick woman on the following day. The "Yes," which I was about to utter stuck in my throat, for, like a night-prowler of some marauding troop, a form enveloped in a long coat shot past us out of the doorway of the adjoining house and rushed down the street. Is was nobody else than Richard; I recognized him quite distinctly by the gas-light.

Has the good fellow lost his reason? Perhaps from care and worry? But he seems to be angry. Otherwise, why did he run off? Guess it who can. But—light begins to dawn upon me! He is jealous and probably suspects that the doctor is my admirer.

O, this jealousy would give me unspeakable joy, more than the victory of the Germans at Sedan; for that would be a clear proof of his burning love. But he has suffered enough, poor fellow. To-morrow he shall receive through my letter an explanation of my nightly promenades. So much I owe him.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM LEONORE'S JOURNAL.

What an awful night lies behind me! My hand trembles, terror almost overpowers me when I think of the experience of the past night. O, what bitter, humiliating trials fall to the lot of a lonely girl! How different it was under the protecting roof of the paternal house. I am broken in spirit as well as in body—I am like one annihilated. I owe it to a Higher Power that I, the proud Leonore—O, I can not write it, it is too terrible! I have been initiated into the affairs of the family. Everything is different from what it appeared to be when I entered this house. My knowledge of human nature has turned out to be limited, but I am richer in experience; all is not gold that glitters, appearances deceive. As I was about to retire last night I heard a low knock at my door. The midnight hour led me to suspect something wrong. Only after the knock had been repeated did I open the door. Alix stood before me. In her pale face, with her long, white night-robe she appeared like a ghost. As one overcome with a heavy burden that had long been borne, she threw herself, sobbing, upon my breast, and cried out in passionate, broken words:

"O, you will not betray my confidence; you will guard a secret that I wish to entrust to you? You have a pure and honorable heart and I must succumb under the burden that I am now carrying unless I can tell some human soul my misery."

Amazed, filled with the deepest sympathy, I sought to calm the poor creature and led her to my couch. Then I bade her confide her sorrow to me and promised that I would conceal it as effectually as if it had been consigned to the grave. There was something unspeakably gladdening to me in the consciousness that I might be the comforter of an unhappy maiden. The hour, the deep quiet that surrounded us, lent a romantic charm to the moment.

In highest anticipation I awaited the confessions of the penitent; amazement, doubt, confusion, sympathy struggled within my bosom.

Alix, when but eight years old, had lost her mother; her father had died during the past summer. She was the apple of her father's eye, she was his all. She had been raised and educated by her governess, an elderly and worthy lady, with motherly tenderness. Her childhood and youth, as she assured me, must have been a journey along a flowered pathway, in the bright sunlight.

"Ah," she proceeded with a sigh, "everything was changed when my father went to Paris and brought back a stepmother. She had been a widow and had a little son aged two years. From that time on the father had time for his beautiful, young wife only. She understood how to flatter him, to feign love and gradually so to bring him under her power that her will alone dominated in the home. Our quiet castle became the gathering place for artists and strangers, for society. One festival followed another; our quiet, happy life was at an end. The father, whose health had never been strong, and who

could not endure the fatigue of social life, began to grow sickly. His physical powers began to decay, a deep melancholy soon took possession of his usually happy heart. He isolated himself from the world, avoided men and shut himself up in his library. Nobody was admitted, excepting his physician and an old faithful servant. Even to me his door was closed, and this caused me almost unbearable pain.

"Ah, many an hour did I sit or kneel before this door, pining for a word and wishing for death. At last my father expressed a desire to see me. With what exultation did I obey the call, how happy, how painful, was the meeting! I found my father wonderfully changed, I scarcely recognized him; from that hour I took my place at his side without any opposition on his part. I became his trusted companion, his comforter—whether he sat in his armchair or lay on his couch. He opened his heart to me, he confessed how deeply he regretted his second marriage and assured me that he had only taken this step with the good intention of leaving me, after his death, a loving friend and guide. He now saw that he had been deceived and with this knowledge the sad certainty had forced itself upon him that she did not love him. His solicitude about me made his approaching death all the more terrible. This statement gave me courage to tell him that I could relieve him of all worry about myself, because I had found a good man who was devoted to me with all his heart, and to whom I could fearlessly commit myself in the event of my father's death. Visibly gladdened and surprised, my father hastily inquired the name of this man. I proudly gave him the desired information.

"Can you guess, Leonore, to whom I have given my heart? It is not he whom the world regards as my betrothed, him I despise. You will have noticed

my contempt, which I have made no effort to conceal."

I told her that her contempt for the nobleman who passed before the world as her betrothed had not escaped me. After I had guessed several times and had named all the men who visited the house, Alix laughed as gleefully as a child, placed her sweet lips to my ear and whispered: "Robert Pirrer."

The name was unknown to me; I knew as much as before and requested Alix to describe his person, position and family more accurately. "He does not belong to the nobility," she said with flashing eye, proudly lifting her head, "but he is the best, noblest, bravest man on earth. He was formerly my brother's tutor. I am not jesting; Robert Pirrer, sometime tutor, is my betrothed. I see that you are astonished and cannot understand all this. Your astonishment will reach the climax when you learn that I do not propose to become Lady Saxingham, but Mrs. Pirrer."

I did, indeed, gaze at Alix with the greatest wonder. I did not understand how a young and rich girl, a member of one of the first and most noble families, could descend from her lofty position to become the wife of a humble teacher, whilst I, an orphan, without money and without home, had despised the lot of an artist's wife.

"Yes, Robert Pirrer," she continued, laughing, "is my betrothed and had my promise before an affirmative answer to Lord S. had been exacted of me. And I will keep my word to Robert Pirrer under all circumstances and at any cost. I will not permit myself to be forced by any power to break this promise. The confession of my love for the poor tutor did not give my father pleasure. He was an aristocrat to the backbone; his family tree was unblemished. Highly as he prized the professor, his pride revolted at the thought that his only daughter would

exchange her brilliant title for an unknown and humble name. It needed my tenderest entreaties to incline him gradually to our union and to gain his consent. But the nearness of death, the clearer knowledge of the nothingness of earthly rank and human greatness made him more mild and yielding. He gave his consent, I must send for Robert immediately. At my father's deathbed our hearts' desire was confirmed; my father himself joined our hands and gave us his blessing.

"The deep, indescribable joy of our hearts upon the attainment of our long-cherished desire beamed from our eyes; the reflection of our joy lighted up the face of the dying man and gave him the appearance of returning health; our hopes of his recovery revived, our happiness reached the highest pinnacle. We sat long at his bedside, we spoke of our plans and hopes and the joy that we anticipated; we repeatedly expressed our gratitude to my dear father; he looked upon us with visible satisfaction, smiled at our display of tenderness and rejoiced with us. Suddenly the pallor of death overspread his features, he struggled for breath, his eyes closed and he sank as if lifeless back upon the pillows. Robert hastened out of the room to call the physician, who resided in the castle in order to be always ready. When the physician had entered the room and stood beside the couch, my anxious heart read at once on his face the confirmation of my worst fears. He frankly told Robert and me, in an adjoining room, that my father would not live through the evening, that he had received a paralytic stroke, and that, possibly, he would not again recover consciousness. Oh, what a terrible moment and what a heavy blow! With the clear vision of love I saw my youthful happiness annnihilated, as the young plant is ruined by the hail-storm. I realized that if my father should close his eyes before

our betrothal had been sanctioned in the presence of witnesses, it would be null and void. With a hypocritical display of despair, my stepmother suddenly rushed into the room, threw herself upon her husband, now passing through his last struggle, whom she had totally ignored throughout his illness, and created such a scene as filled all those present with disgust and myself with the greatest indignation. Her lament resounded through the whole house. Her cries that she might not be left a widow, awakened for a moment the fleeting life. The dear father opened his eyes and by a sign of the hand gave his wife to understand that he had something to say to her. She placed her ear closely to the colorless lips. I saw plainly that he uttered a few words, and felt at once what it was that he had confided to her. The wicked, annihilating, threatening look that she cast upon me after my father had ceased speaking told me that she knew all, but warned me that trouble and suffering would ensue. Once more the beloved eyes of the dying man opened. They rested on Robert and me. A happy smile spread over his features and, with the conviction that he had secured our happiness, he breathed his last.

"Hardly had the coffin been lowered into the vault when my stepmother summoned me into the large family-room. Never in my life shall I forget that hour. There was upon her beautiful, aristocratic features no trace of warm and tender feeling for me nor of sorrow for the dead. Hard-heartedness and cruel inflexibility gleamed from the large dark eyes. With the loftiness and the decisiveness of a commander she let me know that henceforth her will alone should be obeyed in this house and that she had determined to place me for some time under the care of a very renowned lady who had charge of a boarding-school for the daughters of the higher aris-

tocracy. My departure was to take place at six o'clock the next morning and I was to be accompanied by an elderly lady.

"Shocked, confounded, speechless, unable to comprehend or to think anything else than that in twelve hours I should be separated forever from Robert, I repaired to my room. After a passionate outbreak, I grew calmer and more collected; and having recovered somewhat from my consternation, my stepmother's purpose became perfectly clear to me. She was determined not to fulfill the last, holy will of a dying man, to ignore the whole affair and to separate forever the lovers. For this reason I must be sent away from the paternal house as soon as possible. With the knowledge that my stepmother would be, from that day forth my bitter, unyielding foe, there came to me suddenly a wonderful power, a feeling of courage, a joy in suffering for love's sake and a confidence that a righteous God would surely bring to naught such intrigues, such wickedness. I wrote a letter to Robert, informing him of what had happened and begging him to trust in me, to yield to the inevitable and to hope that the issue would be a happy one. I promised him that I would never belong to any other man. Our old, faithful waiting-man, John, carried the letter. He brought me an answer—only a few lines, full of deepest affection, full of thankfulness for my love and steadfastness, full of courage and hope that a kind Providence would guide us safely through the dangerous and bewildering future. * * * * The following morning I took my departure. Not even the joy of one glance of farewell from Robert was granted me.

"My stay at M—— was not unpleasant. Association with the young girls, who were all of happy spirits and whose lives had not yet been darkened by sorrowful experiences, was beneficial to me. I

grew strong in body and soul. I had no correspondence with Robert. My heart beat with longing and joy when, after the lapse of half a year, I returned to my home. Ah, I did not find Robert. My stepmother had deemed it advisable to get him out of the way. As if incidentally she mentioned that she had engaged a new tutor of a less liberal political creed. Fortunately, I had been informed of this change by the coachman when he met me at the station, otherwise I might have betrayed myself. As it was, my face remained as immovable as marble, despite the penetrating look of my stepmother.

"About six weeks ago my stepmother gave the first dinner since papa's death. Lord Saxingham was one of the invited guests. I discovered, with a sort of dread, that he seemed pleased with me. I had the feeling of a bird under the steady gaze of a serpent. After a few days I was summoned to appear before my stepmother. In the presence of the tutor, who had meanwhile been advanced to the position of steward, she disclosed to me the fact that Lord Saxingham had done our house the honor of asking for my hand and that I was now to regard myself as his betrothed. Convinced that every word of protest would be thrown away, I took refuge in deceit. In reply to my stepmother's question as to whether I consented, I said "Yes," but in my heart I was firmly resolved to take steps towards escaping from her power, and to carry out my promise to Robert. The basilisk-eye of the steward sought to penetrate my inmost soul, but I succeeded in bearing quietly his inquisitorial glance and deceiving him.

"From that time on I have played my part to perfection. Sometimes I have almost despised myself for the role that I have assumed, but I have quieted myself with the thought that I do it for love's sake, for the sake of Robert; and so it happens that

to-day nobody has the least suspicion that to-morrow, at the same hour in which my Lord arrives in order to claim me, as his bride, I shall be Robert's bride."

Hereupon she confided to me the following:

Her aunt, who lives in London, had offered to act as protectress of the two lovers. The marriage was to take place at her home. A German clergyman, a friend of her aunt, was to officiate. Her betrothed, who had the prospect of a professorship at Göttingen, had already arrived. Under pretense of making a visit to her sick aunt, Alix would go to London to-morrow—and would never return. * * * * "As to her dowry," Alix concluded sadly, "the rich daughter of this house carries only her jewels. These are my incontestable possessions; my godmother's gift upon the occasion of my confirmation, and valued at 500 pounds sterling. With these turned into money we shall have the necessary capital for beginning our household. These diamonds are locked up, together with the family diamonds, in a case in the library. I must now secure them. I did not get possession of the key until to-day. It is a terribly difficult task for me to accomplish. Although I have the fullest right to take my own property, yet I seem to myself like a thief." She then inquired of me whether I would accompany her to the library. I declared my willingness to render her this service: there were no terrors for me in such romantic trips during the night; on the contrary, I had a desire to meet the ghosts of this house. There was something adventurous in this experience. I seized a silver candlestick, blew out the light, took Alix by the arm and led her through the corridor. Not a sound was audible, not a light was visible. Fortunately, Luna lighted us on our way, though occasionally hiding her countenance behind a veil of clouds. Alix's arm rested heavily on mine. The creaking of a board

under our feet, the screeching of a weather-vane, the cracking of the wainscoating caused her to shudder. Suddenly she wavered and leaned heavily on my shoulder. I caught her, now in a swoon, in my arms and carried her back to my room, where I laid her on a couch. I bathed her temples with water. After she had recovered slightly she started to rise. But I gently forced her back and represented to her the impossibility of her executing the proposed plan, at least during this night, on account of the excited state of her nerves. "I must, I must, to-morrow morning it will be too late. I have had the strength for far more important matters, and shall I now give up in the face of this small undertaking?" she exclaimed tearfully. It then occurred to me to venture forth alone. I proposed this to Alix. Full of joy and thankfulness she handed me the key, a small one that fitted her father's writing table, and a large key to the door of the library. Having been accurately instructed as to the location of the desired treasure, I started on my mission. In the great ancestral hall, through which I had to pass, a feeling of horror came upon me. The moon cast such strange reflections on the life-size figures, which seemed to step out of their frames, while their faces frowned upon me, the disturber of their rest. The old-fashioned, gigantic key turned with difficulty; my delicate hand was almost too weak to unlock the door. At length I succeeded and I had reached the goal, the old library, which serves also as death-chamber, for here, during many centuries, all the noble lords have drawn their last breath. The room was as dark as the grave: the light of the moon was shut out by shutters and heavy damask-curtains. I lighted my candle and after having searched all corners to convince myself that I was the only person in the great, large room, I stepped to the carved oak writing-desk, previously indicated

to me, opened it and drew out the third drawer on the right. There lay the precious jewels in a red case.

In the moment when I stretched out my fingers to take the red morrocco box my wrist was seized and held in a firm grasp; my pulse stopped, I became dizzy. I believe I would have fallen to the floor had not a well-known and repugnant voice resounded in my ear: "Thief." This word acted like an electric shock upon me. I recovered myself and looked up into the sneering face of the steward.

"Behold! the unapproachable, proud Leonore caught in the very act of a diamond robbery," he said insultingly, feasting his eyes upon his supposed victim, while my soul burned and I could not find speech to utter the tumultuous feelings that poured like a flood upon me. "Who would have thought," he continued, no doubt interpreting my silence for shame and remorse, "that this cold heart, apparently inaccessible to love, would beat all the more quickly at sight of precious stones!"

I believe that if I had had a dagger at this moment I would have driven it through his breast. My indignation had, at the last words, increased to rage, and my tongue was now loosed. "Another word, wretch," I exclaimed, "and I will call up the castle."

"That would be unwise, Leonore, and would not harmonize well with the craft and with the talent for large undertakings that you have just displayed," he said in a tone which aroused me yet more. There lay, too, in the omission of "Fräulein" a familiarity which threatened to derange my mind. I needed all my will-power in order to control myself. "You please me, Leonore. I even believe that I could love you, that we should suit together and would make a happily married couple," he recommenced. "What would you say if I did not inform on you, but shared with you, and we were then, in possession of the fam-

ily jewels, to seek a foreign shore and to build in the new world a large and beautiful home? I am weary of my office here; have had enough of being the foot-ball of a peevish woman. Well, what do you say, my beautiful one?"

"That you are a scoundrel," I replied, rising to my full height, my composure completely restored, while I showed the deepest contempt for the man.

"Oho! take care of your words, Leonore," he proceeded in a fury. "One pull of the bell will draw hither all the servants and you will stand as a midnight depredator in the presence of witnesses. "Consider," he whispered softly, standing close beside me, "that you will then be marked for all time, will be an outcast from society,—whilst, if you agree to my proposition, you will have a future such as will be suitable to your beauty and your gifts. I will give you five minutes for deliberation—you have the choice between imprisonment and golden liberty at my side. I do not doubt for a moment that you, in your prudence, will choose the latter. There is nothing else left for you to do. The diamonds without me—that shall not be."

These words presented suddenly and clearly my awful position. I saw that appearances were against me, that everybody must and would hold me guilty of attempted theft, for I had no proof of my innocence unless I should betray Alix and her lover. My pride and my love of humanity would not permit me to purchase my release at such base price. The steward's hand still held the bell-rope. If he called the servants, my good name would be contaminated for all time. I—I—Leonore Barndorf, would be arrested. My heart almost stood still at the thought. I was in danger of fainting; it was a terrible situation. I suffered the anguish of hell. I saw the bell-rope begin to move; my danger was great; my suf-

fering soul cried to the Almighty for help! And He helped!

Like a rescuing angel sent from above, Alix stood in the door-way. The steward shrunk together. I flew to her with a cry of joy.

Alix approached the steward with the mien and carriage of a princess. "I heard the proposal that you made to Leonore," she said in a cold, calm voice. "May I ask by what right you thus insult my friend and what leads you hither at *this* hour of night?"

The steward's eyes turned green, his features were distorted by rage. He restrained himself with great power and spoke with forced composure. He claimed to have heard somebody gliding into the library, had hastily donned his clothes and had surprised me in the act of opening the drawer in which the family diamonds were kept. His proposition to me was quite naturally only a trap intended to discover how far my baseness reached.

Alix interrupted his speech. "Spare yourself further words, sir," she said coldly, with indescribable contempt. "Leonore came hither at my command; that will be sufficient explanation to you of the 'baseness' of her character. And if you are tired of being the foot-ball of mamma's moods, as you said, you are free to leave the castle in the morning."

"We'll see about that," said the steward, gnashing his teeth. "I have caught a servant of this house in the act of opening the desk that holds the family treasures and I will at once announce the fact to my lady. The fiction about your command to fetch the diamonds does your angelic heart great honor," he laughed scornfully, "but nobody will believe that, I least of all, and that you will soon find out." He seemed about to leave, but Alix detained him with a commanding gesture.

"If you really accuse Leonore, if you cast the

suspicion of such a base deed on this honorable girl, I will to-morrow place in mamma's hands this letter which you dropped on your way to the library and which I picked up. It makes some strange revelations about you and your family." Without another word he hastened out of the library. But I gave a sigh of relief and threw myself, sobbing, on Alix's breast. "That was a fortunate discovery, Leonore," she said, "for without this talisman we should have been in an evil plight. God be praised that my strength has sufficed for this hour of trial." "Yes, God be praised," I exclaimed with all my heart. Unnoticed we returned to our rooms. Neither of us will ever forget this night.

* * * * *

Alix, now Mrs. Pirrer, left a few hours ago with her husband for the continent. What an eventful day lies behind me! How various and numerous events can be crowded into the short period of twelve hours! My head whirls.. The day's experiences pass before my mind's eye like the pictures of a panorama. The last and most lovely of these pictures is Alix's marriage. We left without seeing the stepmother, who kept her bed owing to headache. As a matter of course, I took my trunk along. My further stay in the castle after the daughter's flight would have been an impossibility. I was invited by Alix's aunt to remain with her until I should find a suitable position and found myself forced to accept the offer. What else could I do?

Without the least envy I fed my soul on the joy of this strange couple. But deep pain gradually rose within me, a nameless sorrow overcame me and my thoughts turned to my former betrothed, who possesses all the external and internal advantages of Pirrer and—I have deserted him. How small, how

ignoble do I seem to be in comparison with Alix. I wander about without a home. The deep, warm love of bygone days burned within me, my heart cried wildly in longing and pain; it was only by the exercise of strong self-control that I managed to conceal my excitement beneath a calm exterior. Is this the first sign of that repentance of which Juliana warned me, of which she said that it carries with it the most terrible condemnation? So long as I sailed along with the stream of gay society I did not feel the gnawing tooth of repentance; I must try to get back into the whirlpool. In calm and quiet waters, as, e. g., here in the house of the puritanical countess, I could not long endure this sorrow.

The newly-married pair left at five o'clock in the afternoon.

To-morrow cards will be sent out to inform the world of Alix's marriage to Robert Pirrer. Immediately after the ceremony had been performed a courier hurried away on horseback to inform the stepmother.

December 30th.

The day closes in this house at nine o'clock in the evening. The quiet of the cloister surrounds me. I must ask myself: Is it not all a dream? With what hopes I entered Worldly Castle, how little did I foresee the chain of circumstances that would so soon bring about my banishment from those walls. Ah, how ephemeral are our plans and calculations! A word from the "great Regent" and the strongest fabric that skill can weave is torn to pieces. To what purpose do we exert ourselves to reach the mountain summit if, when we have nearly reached the height, a misstep hurls us into the awful depths of the precipice?

The day, passing on leaden wing, is at last ended.

At seven o'clock I met the countess at tea. I observed that she was unusually cheerful; the corners of her mouth twitched with suppressed laughter. After we had drunk our tea she set a large pair of tortoise-shell glasses on her nose, took out of her reticule a large newspaper and smoothing it out on her lap, said:

"Now listen, Miss Leonore, how they speak about both of us in this paper. We are stoned. It is good that I am built of iron and that I am as invulnerable as Achilles, and that I am not even vulnerable in the heel. I am clad in armor from head to foot. The poisoned arrows of malice and slander break off. Ha, ha," she laughed until the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks. "A bomb bursting in the midst of this 'cream' of society could not have created a greater panic than the announcement of Alix's marriage." And then she read slowly, emphasizing each word, and with visible satisfaction, a long article, in which the event that caused the widest discussion and the greatest excitement among the higher classes—the marriage of a daughter of the oldest family of England with a dismissed tutor and her flight from the parental roof—was served up for a scandal-loving public in all details, with little truth and much fabrication. The countess' mouth watered and her eyes shone in triumph, but anguish seized my heart when I heard my own name and learned that I was regarded as a German adventuress and that the guilt was chiefly ascribed to me. The newspaper article stated that, by persuasion and trickery, I had gained an influence over the daughter of the house, who had been entrusted to me, in order that I might demand a large sum of money for the service that I had rendered her. Finally, the author of the article warned all mothers against receiving the German teacher, Leonore Barndorf, for she was an arch-de-

ceiver, was a mistress of intrigue and had shown herself better qualified as an actress than as a teacher or ladies' companion.

I nearly swooned, everything grew dark before my eyes. Had not the countess come hurriedly to my assistance, I should have sunk to the floor. Fortunately the paroxysm of pain was relieved by a flood of tears. I was ridiculed by the countess for taking the matter so to heart. But I rejoined that I stood alone, that I was forced, unassisted, to make my way through the world, and that I could not remain indifferent when my good name was attacked. She saw that I was right and regarded the matter with more seriousness. After she had re-read the part of the article that referred to me personally, she expressed the opinion that this slanderous article would doubtless have harmful consequences for me.

She had not at first thought of this side of the question, on account of the triumphant joy that she felt over the successful trick that she had played on the crowd which, unjustly and pitilessly, had years before trodden her heart and her good name in the dust. Alix had not thought of the evil consequences that might result, had not even suspected they were possible, otherwise she would not have drawn me into the secret. "But," said the countess with a kindly look, "you are as well off here as if you were in Abraham's bosom; stay with me. Give up your poor life of wandering. You have just passed through a bitter experience, and, alas! this is not the end. Life is a battle. Be warned by this one experience. Become my assistant in the charitable work that I carry on; that, too, is a calling which has its joys."

It seemed as though the perspective of a prison opened before me and the inmate of a prison-cell described to me the pleasures of prison-life. No, never could I be content with such a monotonous exis-

tence, even though occupied with the noblest activities. It pained me to refuse such a well-intended offer. I tried to give no offense by my declination and therefore spoke with becoming gratitude and courtesy. I told the countess that I must earn a living and must lay something aside for a rainy day. The good lady saw this quite as clearly as I and regretted that she did not have more means at her disposal in order that she might offer me a yearly salary. After further consideration she said that a happy idea had occurred to her. It would be impossible for me to remain here, since the steward, from whose pen the newspaper article had doubtless come, would not leave me unmolested, but would persecute me day and night. And even if the doors of another house should be opened to me, he would not rest until his slanders had brought about my banishment from the new position. The countess advised me to get out of the way of this enemy, to turn my back on London and to flee to Paris. She had there an intimate friend, a rich widow, from whom I should certainly receive a kind and hearty welcome, and with whom I might remain until I had secured a position. "I will write to her at once," she added earnestly, "and inform her." With that the countess arose.

I saw that nothing remained for me to do except to follow this advice. The time for my departure was set for the day after to-morrow.

I received to-day from My Lady the full quarterly installment of my salary, but not a line accompanied the letter. The address on the envelope was in the hand of the steward.

In the retirement of my chamber, where I was once more capable of quiet thought and deliberation, the full importance of the blow that has been aimed at me stood forth clearly. My good reputa-

tion has been attacked, my name will be passed from mouth to mouth. I shall be publicly disgraced. I am an outcast from society. O gracious God, preserve me from madness. My head whirls; torture would be nothing to the shame that I must bear. And I am defenseless. I must escape my slanderers through cowardly flight.

And if this news should reach the fatherland, if Oscar—I can hardly bear the thought—if he should doubt me and despise me, then there would be but one thing left for me—death! I could not endure life any longer.

O Juliana! The storm of which you warned me, has burst over my head. Remorse gnaws at my heart.

The masts of my ship begin to crash, the sails are torn, it is night within and around me, I wring my hands in despair. Oscar, I am atoning in this awful hour the wrong that I have done thee!

January 2nd.

I have recovered the disturbed equilibrium of my soul. Taking example from the strength of soul exhibited by the aged countess, I steeled my heart, aroused my sinking courage, found rest for my doubting soul. I feel myself exalted above the unjust judgment of the multitude. The masts of my ship point proudly towards the skies, my vessel has given proof of its power to cope with the storm. Wave and lightning can do it no harm, it sets forth boldly upon its new course; I stand with lifted head at the rudder and cry: Farewell, Albion! My recent experience, so I say to myself, was only a piece of comedy. The curtain has fallen—in France a new scene will commence.

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The Sylvester bells, with their brazen tongues, announced that the old year was passing away. Juliana's sitting-room was decorated in festive garb. In the middle of the room stood the slender, but graceful fir-tree. Once more the bright lights sent joy to the heart, once more the Christmas festival was recalled. At a small table, covered with a white cloth, stands Juliana in a black satin dress, somewhat worn, but in which she nevertheless appears to advantage. She wears a large white apron and is diligently engaged in placing oranges and citrons into a gilded glass-bowl. Günter has been invited to spend the evening, or, rather, he has expressed the wish to spend a few hours, after the nurse has put Ellen to sleep, in Juliana's comfortable home, in order that sad reminiscences may not too deeply depress him. Walli lies on a couch, her arms are crossed under her little head. Silence prevailed for awhile. Walli at length spoke.

"Do you know, little aunt, that I have long been watching you with wondering eyes? The costly flowers, the camellias and the azaleas, and all the other beautiful plants, which you have so carefully tended, pale beside you. I do not remember to have seen you ever so animated, so indescribably beautiful. Günter will most certainly think the same as I do—"

Juliana laughed. "Günter! That name is always on your lips, child." She loosed the apron and sat down in an arm-chair, leaning her head against the cushion. "I believe," she continued banteringly, lifting her finger in warning, "that our dear neighbor occupies an entirely too large amount of space in your world. Is that not true, little one?"

Walli at first gave no answer. The large blue eyes closed. She appeared to be in deep meditation. She then lifted the upper part of her body, supported

her little head on her elbow and said in an earnest tone:

"Yes, it is true. Günter begins to occupy all my thought to the banishment of everything else. Sometimes it pains and troubles me greatly that I bestow so much of my thought upon him. When I awake, Günter thrusts himself between God and myself, whereas God was always, formerly, my first thought. 'Will he come to-day?' is the first and most important question. At night, whereas I formerly went to sleep immediately after my prayers were ended, thoughts of Günter keep me awake a long time. I then recall every dear word, every glance. I live on these happy recollections," and she laughed. "When he is here, I am glad—I can not tell how glad—but I am backward, also, and confused. Have you noticed this? I hardly dare to open my eyes. When he has left, everything suddenly takes on a somber hue; it is as if, with his departure, the dear Sun had vanished."

She laid her finger on her cheek and thoughtfully proceeded:

"My soul is not just as it should be. There is something strange there which oppresses me and draws me away from God. I am unspeakably happy, yet not in the same way as I was of old. I have lost some of my sweet peace of heart. I must confess to you—since I have proceeded so far—that I love Günter more than my father of blessed memory. But I love Günter in quite a different way; for I did not think so much of Papa. Tell me, dear aunt, is it wrong, is it a sin, to love a human being to such a degree as to have him always in mind and to be drawn away from God on his account?" Walli's large eyes remained fixed expectantly on Juliana's lips.

Juliana did not answer immediately. What she had just heard struck her to the heart. A maiden's

heart had been disclosed to her, unsuspectingly, unconsciously had made confession of the purest love, a love that had already taken deep root, but a love which must prove entirely hopeless, and which would produce only sadness, pain and tears instead of fragrant blossoms. Walli, the delicate creature, so long visited by physical pain, whom she had promised to protect from every adverse breath of air, this dear girl must now experience the severest sorrow, that of hopeless love? Juliana's heart was filled with pain. But, with the eye of a tried physician, she recognized that quick means must be adopted in order to prevent the evil from spreading.

"You are so silent, Juliana. Why do you not answer my question?"

"I did not find the right answer, child. I was thinking the matter over. I now say 'yes'" replied Juliana, controlling her excitement. "So soon as our feeling, for example our affection for a friend, obtains the mastery over us, lays a yoke upon us, limits our freedom of will, absorbs completely our thoughts, draws the soul away from God and effects unrest within us, robs us of our peace of mind, then it becomes a wrong, a sin, a kind of idolatry, which we must oppose with all our power and energy before it becomes a consuming fire. Child, as often as your thoughts escape and wander to Günter, direct them with firm power of will toward some other subject; shake off the strange feeling that saddens, burdens and disquiets you. And above all remember, child, that Günter and Ellen may just as suddenly vanish from our narrow, quiet circle as they entered it. But what would become of us if we set our thoughts and hearts so firmly and absolutely upon these temporary guests, since, sooner or later, what I have just indicated must happen? Or if—if Günter should, for Ellen's sake, decide to marry

again? Then his intercourse with us would cease of itself."

"O dearest Juliana," laughed Walli, "quite on the contrary, our intercourse would then begin to be right intimate; we should then be *one* family."

"How so? I do not understand that," said Juliana, shaking her head.

"Well, I have my own ideas on the subject," Walli commenced with an air of mischief, "and I am well acquainted with the one whom Günter would choose for his second wife and I know that he could not find a better, nobler, more perfect life-companion and that in all the wide earth there could not be a more faithful, more lovable stepmother for Ellen."

"Who is this phenomenon? Your cousin in New York?"

"I ought not to tell," Walli replied, embarrassed, and tugging at her apron.

"Why not? You arouse my curiosity," said Juliana.

"It is you," Walli said softly and slowly. "Mr. Günter—"

"Walli," Juliana interrupted, in a tone that betrayed terror, "do not say that; you should not have entertained such an idea."

"Why not? Would that be something wicked, little aunt, if Mr. Günter loved you and wanted to marry you?" asked Walli naively.

"Nothing wicked, but impossible," rejoined Juliana, violently agitated. "And God knows," she continued in a calmer and deeply earnest tone, "that as far as the heaven is from the earth, so far removed is the thought in my mind of having awakened in Günter any other feeling than that of purest friendship. I have not even regarded him in the light of a widower eager for second marriage. This evening for the first time did the possibility of his entering the marriage relation again force itself upon me, and

I suggested this possibility in order to warn you. I would have given much if this delicate subject had not been mentioned between us; there are things that one dare not touch upon, which are as sensitive as a brightly polished steel blade and which, by the mere breath of the mouth lose their brightness."

Walli exclaimed sadly, "how I lament my unwise remark! But, to speak frankly, this idea did not originate in my head. Margaret laid the foundation for my castles in the air. She informed me that Günter's old cook had one time said to her: 'You will not have far to move, one of these days, only from one door to another;' and she felt certain that her master would some day conduct you as his wife into his home."

A deep pallor overspread Juliana's face. With quivering lips, and in a tone that was hoarse from emotion, she said, as she hastily rose from her place: "This communication alters matters. You need not blame yourself on account of what has been said, child. On the contrary, it is fortunate that my eyes have been opened." With this she hurried into the adjoining room and closed the door behind her. Walli gazed after her with a puzzled look, then fell into meditation upon Juliana's strange agitation and her last enigmatic statement.

When Juliana returned, her countenance bore that expression of exalted, almost heavenly calm that fills us when, by sacrifice of ourselves, we have fought our way to a great, firm resolution and obey the behest of duty.

Seating herself beside Walli, she drew a letter out of her pocket and said: "Eight days ago I received this letter from a friend of my youth. She has a renowned school for girls at C——. Out of regard for her health she has decided to retire from the management of the school. Contented with our

present lot, I gave this offer no consideration. But now I am convinced that it would be a piece of unpardonable folly to refuse this offer, which guarantees us a safe and peaceful existence. It will be best for us both—" she hesitated a moment—"to leave here. What have you to say, child?"

Ah, Walli said nothing! She could have cried aloud for pain and could have begged Juliana to leave her. Her heart seemed ready to break at the thought of leaving home and—Günter. But, like a heroine, she controlled herself, she held in check her nameless woe. "Whithersoever you go, dear Juliana, I will go," was her quiet and resigned answer, after a short silence; but the hot tears rolled down her cheeks. "I myself believe that it is best for us to go. Such sacrifice is certainly pleasing to God and perhaps I can thus atone for the wrong I may have done. Write at once to your friend—"

A loud knock at the door interrupted Walli. At Juliana's "Come in" Günter entered. A single glance at his face sufficed to show Juliana that he had had some unpleasant experience. His brow was knit, his countenance was gloomy, his face was pale. Quickly going to meet him, Juliana gave him her hand and said in a tone which betrayed her anxiety: "Something has happened to you; I read it in your face. Ellen—is Ellen—"

"Thank God, Ellen is well," Günter replied before Juliana had finished her anxious inquiry. "Calm yourself; I alone am concerned," he concluded in a fatigued tone, and sank into a chair.

For a moment silence reigned. Juliana and Walli awaited with anxiety an explanation. Günter had covered his face with his hand. Suddenly he lifted his head, brushed the thick hair back from his forehead, and with a warm glance towards Juliana, who had seated herself opposite to him, said: "I have

cast a gloom over your happy spirits, as I observe with regret. I recognize in this a fresh proof of your friendship and feel assured of your hearty interest in my welfare."

"Are new proofs of this necessary to convince you?" Juliana asked, as if in gentle reproach.

"They are not necessary, but they afford me the greatest pleasure. Pray, listen, Fräulein Juliana, while I tell you something of importance. Perhaps you can calm my perturbed heart as you have done before. The old year, before taking its departure, has left me a disagreeable memento in the shape of a telegram which makes it necessary for me to leave in haste—"

"To leave? Whither? Far away? How long?" Walli exclaimed, leaning forward with an expression of anxious expectation.

"Only to South America!" Günter answered with a forced smile. "How long—the gods know that," he added with a sigh.

"To South America? You are trying to mystify us," Juliana said, smiling, whilst her internal unrest was mirrored on her countenance.

"I wish I could turn the bitter fact into a jest," said Günter, again sighing.

"To South America!" Walli repeated, dwelling on each word as if to grasp its full meaning. Deep silence ensued. Günter was the first to speak.

"The news which I received struck me as lightning from a clear sky. Strange! Formerly such things did not disturb me. Such a journey afforded me a welcome change. To-day my whole being rebels against this 'must,' against bidding farewell to my dear home, against interrupting my pleasant visits to you. I am a riddle to myself," he concluded thoughtfully, while he directed a peculiarly questioning glance at Juliana who, supporting her head upon her hand, appeared lost in deep meditation.

"And Ellen—will you rob of us of Ellen?" Walli inquired softly, with an expression of deepest pain on her dear face.

"I would gladly take my child along," Günter replied. "But I realize that it would be dangerous at this season of the year, to expose her, with that troublesome cough, to the hardships of such a journey. There is, however, but *one* condition under which I will consent to a temporary separation from my darling; she must, during my absence, be wholly under your care and protection. May I ask, may I hope for, this great and kind service from you?"

Juliana thought a moment, then answered: "Certainly. It is self-evident that we could not, in this dilemma, decline to come to your aid. At the same time it will give us great joy to keep the dear child with us. Is that not true, Walli?"

Walli nodded her head in approval. "O, certainly, that is true," was all that she could say.

"In so graciously fulfilling my request you have removed a heavy burden from my soul," Günter said, visibly relieved. "But you have also encouraged me to prefer a second request. The proverb, you see, is proved in my case: Give a man your finger and he will take the whole hand. Now grant me a willing ear. Ellen's cough has begun to give me some anxiety. Some days ago I sent for Dr. Wallheim, of Bonn, as you know. He came to-day and he advises that Ellen be sent as soon as possible to a milder climate—to Meran or Nizza. I now ask you, dear friend, to accompany my child to Meran, to which place I give the preference. In the opinion of the physician, to whom I described Fräulein Walli's condition, the climate of Meran would be beneficial to her also. He even hoped that entire recovery might result. Thus the sacrifice which you would make for me and for Ellen would be productive of blessing

for yourself. Will you make this sacrifice, Fräulein Juliana?"

"With all my heart," Juliana warmly assured him. "If all sacrifices were equally easy! And you," turning to Walli, "will cheerfully make this sacrifice which gives you hope of health?"

"And think, dear Walli," Günter added, when Walli remained silent and sorrowful, "what joys await you if you recover your strength. You can throw aside your crutches and can visit all the attractive places in the vicinity of Meran. And some day I shall come back from my journey and you, together with Ellen, will run to meet me."

"O, do not describe this possibility any further," cried Walli, "it is too beautiful! But," she sighed, "who knows how long you will be absent."

"Perhaps I shall return sooner than you wish. The possibility of a quick return is just as near as that of a long stay in America. If the authorities succeed in capturing a leaseholder who, under pretense of a commission from me, sold a part of my estates, then my stay will not be long. And I hope that the ship will not sink. Let us hope for the best. Everything respecting your trip to Meran I will write out for you to-night yet and send you to-morrow morning. I shall leave on the early train. I shall not say good-bye to Ellen—it will be better so for father and child."

A tear rolled down Walli's cheek. Günter's eyes were moist. "I must go," his voice was hoarse, "gladly as I would tarry longer." He gave Juliana both his hands and said: "Farewell, Juliana, grant me now and then a moment of friendly remembrance. To ask you to take good care of my Ellen would be to grieve you. I know that you will be a most faithful guardian. Again, farewell."

"Farewell, God be with you," said Juliana with emotion, returning heartily Günter's pressure of the

hand. Günter then approached Walli, who had buried her face in her hands and was sobbing gently. With tender force he loosed the soft little hands, took the little face between his large hands and in a tone of unspeakable tenderness said:

"I do not know what I would give to keep the tears of sorrow from these dear bright eyes, yet these tears—strange contradiction—shed for my sake make me indescribably happy. But now be the sensible Walli, as you generally are and—farewell, dear child! Think of your absent friend in your prayers." Günter bowed his manly form, his lips barely touched the pure, white forehead. Without another word he passed through the door.

When Günter's step could no longer be heard, Walli said, pressing her hands upon her face wet with tears: "O Juliana, how parting pains!"

"Yes, child," Juliana said sadly, "I myself have experienced that! But come now, child, let us go to rest. It is past midnight. God will dispose all things for our good."

* * * *

The express entered the Paris station. A young lady, in deep mourning, stepped out of the ladies' coupe. Her elegant and distinguished appearance, as well as the fact that she was unaccompanied, immediately attracted the attention of the men who were standing or idling about, especially of several who impudently stared at her. These latter did not gain their object, however, for she bestowed no notice upon them. Her countenance remained impassive, and her bearing was so refined that none of the gaping crowd picked up sufficient courage to obtrude himself further. A baggage-man approached her with the question as to whether she had any luggage.

"Yes, a trunk, here is the check," was the young lady's answer, and she at once reached for her pocket-

book. But the pocket-book had disappeared. Trembling from fright, she hurried back into the coupé and hunted for her pocket-book. The conductor assisted her in the search. But her search proved vain. The occurrence had drawn quite a group of curious people. The misfortune of the beautiful young lady aroused the sympathy of a majority of the bystanders; on the other hand, the young fops, whom the stranger had treated with such indifference, made remarks that deeply hurt the person against whom they were directed: "A new way of making a fortune," said one. "A veritable adventuress, an excellent comedienne," exclaimed another. The hot blood rushed to the lady's face, for a moment her self-control threatened to desert her; the suspicion that might be cast upon her forced itself clearly upon her. Summoning all her power, she secured control over herself and besought the conductor to lead her to one of the railroad officials. With a firm step she followed through the crowd. She communicated in few words to the official her misfortune and requested him to have her trunk opened; she would furnish him with a description of the contents in order to identify herself as the owner. The official obligingly complied with her request. She named two objects, a morocco-leather case with the name "Leonore Barndorf," and portfolio. The official regarded this as sufficient proof and let her have the trunk. With a lighter heart and with proudly lifted head Leonore passed the idling crowd, still standing in the neighborhood, entered a carriage and ordered the coachman to take her to the residence of the Countess Colombier. The carriage finally stopped before a stately mansion in an elegant quarter of the city. Leonore alighted, the coachman carried the trunk to the house-door and called up the porter. The latter soon appeared and inquired what Leonore wanted. She handed him the card of the baroness and re-

quested that she be announced to the countess. The porter needed what seemed to Leonore an almost endless period in order to decipher the card, then, returning it and shaking his head, replied:

"Madame is mistaken. The countess lives here, but left yesterday. Her house is closed."

Leonore stared stupidly at the man as if she had not fully understood him. Even now she was calm, but it was the calm that causes the heart to stand still and changes the life to stone. Her feet gave way beneath her, she sank upon her trunk. "O pray, ask once more whether the countess left no word, whether she received no letter from me," she said, forcing herself to speak in a kind tone. With visible reluctance the porter returned into the house and came back after a long interval with a letter in his hand.

"The countess left no word," he said surlily. "This letter came for her yesterday shortly after she had departed."

Leonore recognized her own letter which she had written from London in order to inform the countess of the time of her arrival. She gave the letter back with a disconsolate air. Her head sank upon her breast. She was for a moment incapable of thought.

A group of passers-by had gathered about the beautiful Leonore who, seated upon her trunk, naturally drew all eyes upon herself. But this roused Leonore from her apathy. She arose with determination and bade the coachman take her to a respectable hotel or boarding-house. The coachman scratched his head, considered for a while and then answered that there was a boarding-house for young girls who were in search of a position. "Then take me there and quickly," said Leonore, hastily entering the carriage. As one broken-hearted she sank back into the hard, worn cushions. Her whole

body was shaken by convulsive sobs. The hot tears poured from her eyes. In a tone of unspeakable misery she cried: "O how forsaken one is when one belongs to nobody in all the world! Like a beggar, like an adventuress, I must wander about and seek shelter in a boarding-house for homeless girls. Ah, if they knew at home, if Juliana suspected how misfortune follows me about! O that I might die!" As an oasis in the desert, the home that she had given up, the house under whose roof she had been safe, rose before her eyes. The feeling of forsakenness increased until it became almost unbearable torment. She looked out of the carriage window, thinking to divert her attention and escape the homesickness that filled her heart. Ah, not *one* familiar, beloved face did her anxious eye behold. She met only the indifferent glances of strangers. In a narrow, gloomy street, before and old, high, decaying building, the carriage stopped. "This is my haven! And how long?" Leonore murmured. "Ah, I am ever going downward instead of upward."

The driver, opening the door, interrupted her painful reflections. He carried the trunk up the stone steps and set it down in front of the closed door. He then demanded his fare, which amounted to two francs.

"You know that my pocket-book has been lost." Leonore said, almost humbly, "and I am not in a position to pay you in coin. Will you take this pin? It is worth at least three times as much as you have charged me." With these words she drew a morocco-leather case out of her pocket and handed the coachman a beautiful pin. The man, a kindhearted and honest sort of person, declined to accept it.

"I will not enrich myself by your misfortune," he said, "sell your valuables and in a few days I will come back to collect my fare." With that he mounted the box, cracked his whip and drove off. Leonore,

moved by this unusual occurrence, gazed after him a moment, then pulled the bell. A long time elapsed before her repeated ringing brought an old, dirty individual to the door to ask what she wanted. After she had made her wants known, the individual before mentioned lifted the trunk and carried it up the steps. She paused before a door upon which stood the name, "Madam Bolin," and asked Leonore to knock. At the summons "Enter," spoken in a sharp, nasal tone, Leonore opened the door and saw before her a matron who held on her lap a pug-dog and a cat and who had in her hand a newspaper which she was vainly endeavoring to read. The dog barked so loudly that Leonore's question was drowned by the noise. After the dog had been pacified, Leonore repeated her question for quarters in this establishment. The woman put on her spectacles and directed a searching, almost impertinent gaze upon Leonore. She appeared satisfied by her inspection, her face assumed a more friendly expression, and she replied in a polite tone that there was a bed to be had in a room occupied by a German girl. In case Leonore did not wish to share a room with somebody else, she must pay twice as much. Leonore's pride struggled powerfully against the idea of occupying a room in company with another girl, but necessity compelled her to accept this arrangement. Madam Bolin directed the servant to conduct Leonore to No. 7. Leonore followed the servant through a narrow court and up a pair of steep, rickety stairs.

"That is your room," said the servant curtly, opening a door over which stood the inscription "No. 7." Leonore entered and found herself in a narrow room, with a low ceiling and a small window. The furniture consisted of two iron bedsteads, two tables and two chairs. It was so cold that Leonore shivered. She felt so uncomfortable that she was undecided whether to remain or to leave and hurry out

into the fresh air. At this juncture a form raised itself in one of the beds. Leonore had not observed this person as she had been completely enveloped in the bed covering. With an exclamation of terror she addressed Leonore and inquired whether she had rented the vacant bed. Leonore answered in the affirmative, in a curt, cool manner. She felt offended at the familiarity of this stranger and therefore took no further notice of her.

She began to unpack her trunk, while the inmate of the other bed again wrapped herself in the covers. The first impression made by her arrival in Paris, the loss of her money, physical and mental exhaustion, and now this poor room where she could not even enjoy the benefit of solitude, all these things, together with the remembrances awakened by the sight of several objects in her trunk, had such an overwhelming effect on Leonore that she sank upon her trunk and burst into tears.

"Why do you weep?" asked the young woman that occupied the other bed, raising herself up again and turning a pale, but not wholly uninteresting, face towards Leonore. "Take my spirit lamp and make yourself a hot cup of tea. Your nerves have been under too strong tension, or perhaps you are suffering from hunger, cold and exhaustion. After you have taken some refreshment, your nerves will become quieter, you will see." Leonore's reserve and pride melted as ice under the warming sun of this well-meant advice. She dried her tears, made herself some tea, and when she had drunk a cup, offered some to her companion, inquiring at the same time in a sympathetic tone whether she was ill and needed anything else.

"Sick? No, indeed," she answered laughingly. "I am as well a fish in water; but I am cold. Since I have no money for fuel, I crawl under the covers

from time to time, in order to warm myself. You will soon try this same method yourself in your own case and discover how well it works. One learns much here of which one did not have the slightest idea before. One musn't lose courage; that is the chief thing. Adopt Diogenes' principle, as I have done: 'To need nothing is divine.' Then you can live anywhere in contentment."

This young woman pleased Leonore. The philosophical wisdom expressed struck her favorably. Putting the principle of Diogenes to a practical test, she laid herself with stoical indifference on the hard, scantily furnished bed and soon fell into sweet slumber.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM LEONORE'S JOURNAL.

January 16th.

My guiding star—which seemed about to set—has reappeared. The storm that roared around my skiff has ceased; the heavens laugh once more in cloudless blue. I have found a congenial situation as reader to a widow, Madam Tremordin. My roommate, Amelia Hauer, maintains that I am one of Fortune's favorites, since this is the first time that one of Madam Bolin's lodgers so rapidly attained the desired goal.

I leave my cell—so I have named my little room—not without sorrow. For it was a haven of rest for me after a stormy and dangerous journey. It is not so easy to part with Amelia. She proved a trusty friend and counsellor.

To-morrow a new era of my existence begins!

January 26th.

A week has passed since my departure from Madam Bolin's. Not one free minute have I had up to this time. When the day is ended the bird seeks its nest; but I must keep a nervous lady, who suffers from sleeplessness, company throughout the night. I must try to lure on the slumber-god by reading drowsy narratives. Alas! I alone am made sleepy. O, who would have prophesied that I, who once was adored by all men, who was the center of the social world in Berlin, would be condemned to wait on a nervous, peevish, narrow-minded French woman. This is not less difficult than the labors of the Danaides. And I suffer the agonies of Tantalus, hunger for mental food.

Madam Tremordin demands, for the wages she pays, my inmost life. She uses it as a spice to lend her own life an agreeable flavor. In spite of all these demands on my time and strength, I feel that I am nothing to her, that she attaches no more value to me than to a new robe or to the dinner which she eats. I am one of the many graceful and valuable things with which she has surrounded herself in order to beautify her life. Notwithstanding the close relationship I sustain to her, she places no more confidence in me than in her little dog and her birds. I often feel as if the breath were being pumped slowly out of my breast and that I must finally smother.. I want to flee — but whither? To Juliana? Not for a whole world! I could not endure the humiliation of returning like a shipwrecked mariner, to beg for shelter. No, I will, I must, hold out.

O, my Oscar, how my poor heart longs for a single glance from thy dear eyes, for one word of love from thy lips! I am so sad, so weary. My pilgrim's staff almost falls out of my hand. Tired and

exhausted, I am about to give up, to think no more, to breathe no more!

"How dull and wearisome this life
When all our striving, working,
But lead to efforts, labors new,
And no loved goal our toil rewards."

March.

Spring has come into the land. Ah, for me the spring-flowers bloom no more!

"Extinguished are the suns so fair
That shone around my youthful way;
Each sweet ideal is dissolved
That once my bosom swelled."

March 16th.

The son of the house has arrived. He is a fine, interesting man, with the air of a soldier. But he is earnest, dreamy, melancholy; eyes that can burn with enthusiasm; tender as a woman; proud and sensitive. His mother, with visible pride, presented him to me. Since his arrival she speaks of him all the time, and desires me to second her enthusiastic praise. But this is extremely difficult for me, since, notwithstanding his physical and mental excellences, I am wholly indifferent with respect to him. I am sorry to see that I have awakened his interest in myself. His glances begin to disquiet me. Is his heart, the heart of a hardened soldier, vulnerable by Cupid's shafts? Or am I mistaken in his intentions?

March 26th.

"And so I wander with my lute
Sad of heart from house to house."

I have received my dismissal. To-morrow at this hour I shall again be seated in my "refuge, the boarding-house Bolin," at the little table beside Amelia. I wait longingly for this moment. My poor little room appeals as strongly to me as does the island to the shipwrecked sailor. I also have suffered shipwreck. It happened in this way: Yesterday afternoon I was writing. Madam Tremordin had gone out to visit a sick friend. Monsieur Henry entered the library, where I was seated. I noticed at once that something was wrong with him, that he was strangely excited. Without a word he seated himself near the window. But he suddenly arose and drew his chair near to mine and began to confess his warm love for me, finally asking me for my hand. I permitted him to finish without interruption, for his mother had bade me not to excite him by contradicting or arguing with him—this would cause his excitement to reach the point of violence. At the moment when he was pleading most earnestly and most tenderly with me, the door opened and Madam Tremordin entered. I was terrified. Henry, however, arose and approached his mother with perfect composure. She seemed to have been turned to a pillar of salt and remained rooted to the spot. He informed her that he had asked for my hand and asked her to bless our union.

This confident belief in and certain assumption of my reciprocal love for him and that I would agree to his proposal, although I had not yet spoken a word to him on the subject, wounded my pride; and the horror that I read upon his mother's face at this announcement of her favorite child's choice, together with the look of hatred and contempt which she cast upon me, aroused me to the uttermost. I had now become incapable of further deliberation. Filled with a desire to pay this woman in her own coin, I did

not stop to choose my words, but informed Henry that my heart belonged to another, his entreaty for the maternal blessing was therefore too precipitate, and that I must firmly reject his offer and request that I be dismissed. Not a word passed Henry's compressed lips. But I could read upon his countenance what he suffered and repented my inconsiderate words. He rushed out of the room as one possessed, bestowing neither word nor look upon me.

I have just received a note from Madam Tremordin. She has sent me three months' salary and has penned me a few lines to the following effect: A coquette who takes pleasure in trifling with men's hearts should not expect to tarry longer beneath her honorable roof.

Is there no law against such attempts to insult a forlorn girl? Must I, unavenged, bear such shame? Yes, I must. I have no weapon against such unrighteousness. But can a just, kind Father in heaven permit this?

"How the waves and how the flames
Spend their fury 'gainst my soul!
Ah, my grief how great!"

March 27th.

Seated again in my—cell! But alone, all alone! Amelia has left, having found a place. O, how gloomy and how lonesome the little room seems without this dear companion and faithful adviser.

April 4th.

Body and soul are atremble from the awful news which Madam Bolin to-day brought me: Henry Tremordin shot himself early this morning. Wherever I turn I see blood and Henry's eye directed upon me with an expression of bitter reproach. Gracious

God, what have I done that I must pass through such heavy trials? I feel free of all guilt in the case of this unhappy man, save in so far as I, in my false pride, wounded him. What a sensation this sad case will occasion: the suicide of an officer. How busy Dame Gossip will be in hunting up all the facts. My name will now be published in the capital city of France. I shall be forced to leave this city also. But no! I will boldly face the world's attacks this time and not cowardly take flight.

I feel relieved, a heavy load is removed from my soul. Henry is not dead. God be praised! The pistol burst and Henry was but slightly wounded in the hand. Madam Bolin has been to see Madam Tremordin, who is confined to her bed in consequence of nervous prostration brought on by her son's frenzied act. Her son, it is reported, sits in his room and refuses to take food or drink. The doctors fear the worst, but give the hope that the presence of the young lady on whose account Henry made the attempt on his own life, might prove beneficial to him.

I have just received a letter from Madam Tremordin. She makes humble, touching entreaties. She begs me to forgive her and to save her son's life. The letter has been followed up by a messenger—one of the physicians. Even this gray-haired disciple of Æsculapius has kindly, but earnestly, urged me to conquer my pride and to do a good, noble work.

My objection that should my return effect Henry's recovery my second departure would certainly bring on a relapse and my self-sacrifice would accomplish only temporary good, the doctor calmly refuted with the argument that one should not hesitate when a human life might be saved. I finally silenced my pride. I have determined to go. To oppose an unyielding disposition to such earnest entreaties might later on occasion me bitter qualms of conscience.

April 10th.

I have been at Madam Tremordin's several days. I have saved a man's life and brought joy to a mother's heart. I feel richly rewarded in the consciousness that I have performed a noble work.

Madam Tremordin received me upon my return as if I were a messenger from heaven. Our last meeting was not mentioned. By the express order of the physicians she conducted me immediately to her son's room. Henry sat on the sofa, his face was buried in his hands. He seemed dead to everything about him. He did not notice even our approach. With throbbing heart I came near him and spoke his name. He shuddered, but remained in his apathetic state. "You should take a walk in the yard, the sun is so bright and warm. I will accompany you," I said, lending my voice as much warmth as possible. The motionless body seemed to be pervaded once more with life. The broad chest heaved with his deep breathing, the hands were loosed. As if awakening from a deep sleep, he stared at me with big, but expressionless eyes. A moment of fearful expectation! Should he not recognize me, then his spirit must be enveloped in eternal night. But he knew me! His eye lighted up. "Leonore!" he said. The sound pierced me to the heart. He sprang up and reached me both hands. I laid, without hesitation, my hands in his. I was now mind-physician and dared not be cold and proud.

Madam Tremordin, who needed all her mental power in order to restrain the expression of her stormy joy, led us by the hand into the sitting-room. There we passed several hours in friendly conversation. Henry was somewhat more earnest than usual, but the only trace of his recent sufferings appeared in his weary and exhausted tone and bearing. Madam Tremordin appears to feel toward me the gratitude

that is manifested towards a physician who has saved a life. She treats me almost with reverence. This gives me pain rather than joy, for I feel that love and sympathy are not elements in this respect that she shows me. But she may hate or love me; I do not propose to be prevented from completing conscientiously the mission that I have undertaken.

M. Henry, according to the physician's statement, has entirely recovered. But he does not yet leave the house. He spends the morning in his room. In the evening he reads to us from his favorite author, Shakespeare. But what next? I ask myself. Madam Tremordin seems to take it for granted that I will remain here; she does not, however, in her selfishness, take under consideration the consequences. Is she of the opinion that her son will gradually be cured of his love, or that I will not be guilty a second time of the hardihood or the foolishness of rejecting such a proffer of marriage? In either case she will be mistaken. Henry's feelings are not superficial. As reserved as his conduct towards me is now, so glowing and so deep is his love. But I can only answer him, "No."

April 30th.

I am now resolved to go shortly. Henry is well in body and in mind; I can consider my mission ended. I will embrace the opportunity when we are alone of preparing him quietly for the necessity of our separation. I can not play the part any longer of a nurse who lulls her child to rest with a song, nor that of an animal trainer who subdues the lion with the power of a glance. Henry has not in a single word, since his recovery, touched on the question of his love for me. This raises him in my estimation, and this alone prevents me from entering upon my proposed plan. The first attempt on his part to ap-

proach me on this subject would result in my immediate departure from this house.

I told Madam Tremordin to-day of my determination. She was frightened, and earnestly entreated me, if I could not become her son's wife, to remain at least until some fortunate occurrence should make an unexpected change in affairs. Then on the other hand, she urged me to take into account the bitter experiences, trials and privations to which one in my position would be exposed, and how secure I should feel at the side of a faithful husband who had the means to surround me with everything that could make life agreeable. Her eloquence did not melt my cold heart. I told her that I would not sell my hand for mere earthly advantage and that I would remain true to Oscar, my first betrothed. To one thing, however, I consented: to delay my departure for some time. This is for me an unspeakably great sacrifice.

"Ah, could I but find an outlet
From the valley's depths
Now covered with the chilling cloud."

A letter from Gertrude, received to-day, carries the impress of deep sadness and fills me with anxiety. Why is she also, so soon after taking up the pilgrim's staff, so weary of the journey? Walli, on the other hand, is reviving at Meran. God be thanked for this.

May 25th.

"I too was born in Arcady,
And Nature, at my cradle side,
Had sworn to grant me joy;
But balmy Spring has brought me only tears."

May! Beautiful, incomparable, flower-bringing month of joy, to which so many hearts look forward expectantly! Thou hast brought me also the myrtle

and the rose, but, in addition, a heart that is sorrowful unto death. Here I sit, about to become a bride. My face is flooded with tears. There lies the bridal robe of heavy, shimmering satin, and there is the veil of Brussels point lace. As often as my eyes fall on these things, I shudder and think that my heart must break. Warm and strong, overpowering, the desire rises within me that I were dead; that I might lie, clothed in my bridal dress, a corpse in the cool bosom of the earth; that I might rest, rest!

In the whirlpool of the past days, idolized, worshipped, exalted to heaven by Henry's mother on account of my sacrifice; filled with the joy of self-sacrifice by the boundless happiness that came to my betrothed through my consent to become his wife, carried along in an ecstacy; feeling myself strong and capable of accomplishing much more; inspired with that feeling of satisfaction which is awakened in us by a noble act, I had begun to hope for the permanency of these feelings and to believe that time would bring me as a reward of my sacrifice, if not happiness, at least inward satisfaction. Vain hope! Mistaken faith! With the approach of the day that will seal my fate for all time, when no step backward can be made, my courage sinks, the heroism of the martyr is changed to despair. The torture of those heroes of faith who entered the arena to become a prey to lions can not have been more horrible than the torment which I endure at the moment when I am about to enter the house of God and lay my hand in Henry's hand before the altar. But I have given my word and I will not break plighted faith a second time. I would prefer death! O, that death might release me from my promise!

The Evening Before My Marriage.

The last day of my maiden freedom is ended. To-morrow at this hour I shall be Leonore Tremordin. O, that my name might be blotted out from among the living. Never did bride long more the wreath of death. Ah, that I might weep on Juliana's breast, describe to her my grief, my torment, and receive comfort and courage from her. I have concealed from the loved ones at home the circumstances leading up to my engagement and the motive that prompted me to my rash resolution; I have deceived them and repeatedly given them the assurance that I am perfectly happy. They rejoice over the brilliant match that I have made. Juliana hopes that I may have a beautiful and happy future at the side of a man in whose high and noble qualities she sees a guarantee for such a future. And yet her letter bears the impress of anxiety, for which she can find no words. If she had a presentiment that I am the most unhappy creature on earth, that I am near despair! From to-day forward I must wear the mask of a perpetual smile. I would bear anything rather than compassion.

We have passed the evening quietly, by ourselves. My future mother-in-law had expressed a desire to hold a nuptial eve festival, but gave up her plan out of deference to my request that such a celebration be omitted. At about eight o'clock Henry received a note from an officer, one of his most intimate comrades, inviting him to a farewell festival at his house. Henry went, after I had almost begged him to go. He returned at eleven o'clock. Strange to say, he went at once to his room, where I could see him striding hurriedly to and fro. Soon a knock was heard at my door. I heard Henry's voice. He requested me to come to the sitting-room, as he desired a few moment's conversation with me. Filled with anxiety,

I did as requested. Madam Tremordin was still up, but retired to her bed-room as I entered. Henry was fearfully pale. He grasped my two hands, looked deeply and searchingly into my eyes, then asked, emphasizing each word: "Do you know a man by the name of Eugene Karstner, Leonore?" Like a discordant note, the name of my enemy, of the steward, sounded in my ear and made me tremble. Like a flash of lightning the certainty came upon me that Henry's question was induced by some slander which he had heard. With the calm of a quiet conscience I lifted my eye fearlessly to his and replied that I knew the man. I then recounted truthfully my experiences at Castle M. * * * *

Henry's countenance cleared. He said: "I know that you are not capable of falsehood. Although I did not for a moment doubt your uprightness of soul, but the knowledge of the facts is of the highest importance to me. This man, this scoundrel, who has been here in Paris for a short time and who has become acquainted with my friend, dared to defame you. For this he shall be punished," he concluded with decision. These words terrified me, for they could have but *one* meaning. I implored Henry to ignore the lie and not to engage in any strife. He reassured me. He declined to communicate to me what the wretch had said and begged me to break off the unrefreshing subject. He kissed me tenderly, wished me good night and left the room. He is a kind, noble man. He deserves a woman's undivided love.

A nearby church clock has just struck twelve. The last stroke announces the commencement of my bridal day! I shall not go to bed, I should not be able to sleep. Why should I toss, restless and tormented by painful thought, upon my couch?

"Now sinks the sun of joy.
To love and hope and happiness farewell.
If memory would but die."

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM GERTRUDE'S JOURNAL.

January.

Here I have been sitting in my little room for half an hour, thinking, deliberating, worrying, and like Faust: "As wise as before." Two handkerchiefs, my own property, belonging to a set of twelve, are costing me all this trouble. I can not comprehend whence they come or where they have been. Just as little can I understand the lines from Richard that accompanied them. The handkerchiefs are a puzzle, the note is Sanscrit. The note reads as follows: "Inclosed are two of your handkerchiefs. The first won for you the warm admiration of a heart. The second annihilated the happy hopes, the true love of a heart. Farewell!"

The one handkerchief I gave to that fat mass of humanity on the train in order to stop the flow of his noble blood. But how did Richard secure possession of it and what relation does it sustain to the other handkerchief? And how can such a small piece of linen win hearts or destroy love and hope? I have grown nervous from much thinking. Bah! I am a dumb thing! The whole thing must be a joke on Richard's part; knowing the small measure of my penetrative power he wants to give me a difficult problem to solve.

But I intend that Richard shall get the worse end of this bargain. When he comes, I shall act as if I had not received the handkerchiefs.

Strange! Yesterday he was not here! Why? My heart is heavy to-day: I do not feel in the least like jesting. I have several times commenced to sing, but each time was compelled to give it up. The appearance of my soul to-day is as topsy-turvy as that of Olga's bed-room. Thorough cleaning and removal of all unnecessary things are needful. First of all my cousin must be banished. He has occupied too much room and has created the greatest confusion in my soul. But it requires the greatest skill to get rid of him. He has fixed himself too firmly, the tormenting spirit.

"My rest is gone, and heavy is my heart.
Sweet peace I never, nevermore shall find."

Saturday night.

Richard has gone, gone never to return! Forever! How can I write this without losing my reason? My godmother told me to-day, just as unconcernedly as if one were to say: It is raining, or: The sun is shining. My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. Everything whirled before my eyes. I hurried out of the room into the kitchen, where Sophia was. Had she not caught me in her arms, I must have fallen to the floor. She told me afterward that I looked like a corpse. Ah, I believe it. My body only lives and I feel as though my body did not belong to me. — This morning when I looked in the glass, I did not recognize myself. "To whom does that pale, languishing face, with the deep-set, inflamed eyes belong?" I asked myself. I sat the whole night on the windowsill. I hoped to catch cold, to bring on a nervous fever and to be relieved from painful thought by the delirium — perhaps even to die! But God did not fulfill my sinful desire, I remained well! And would I not have been guilty of self-murder? O, have I deserved to be deceived, to be so deeply wounded? I had the greatest

confidence in Richard's uprightness and faithfulness and now I have the fearful, bitter experience that he has only been trifling with a true girl's heart, that I have only served as a toy with which to while away the time, and that he has now grown tired of me.

Ah yes, he had grown weary of me. Probably this wicked, cruel man has a genuine Othello-nature and is jealous of the doctor in whose company he yesterday evening discovered me? But then he should have spoken to me about it: that would have been manly and honorable. But — I do not believe that jealousy moved him to flight; no, that might have served as a pretext to get away from me: he was simply tired of the game. Men in general are said to be inconstant in love and like butterflies flit from flower to flower. I want to hear nothing further about any man. To-day I fasten the door of my heart with a gigantic bolt, nobody shall break in again! But — ah! I cannot put Richard out; I feel that he will have possession forever. Despite everything, I still love him.

Ah, if some one could tell me the meaning of these two handkerchiefs! In Shakespeare's Othello a handkerchief plays a prominent part, is one of the things which leads to laying suspicion on the Moor. But this Moor pleases me — he did not run away, as Richard has done. Oh, how foolish thus to trouble myself about such a man's heart. One ought to laugh and to hold him in contempt. That would be the proper course. But — who can do that?

Ash Wednesday.

My window-panes are scribbled over with the name "Richard." As often as I enter my room, my eye is drawn, as if magnetically, to this name. Then my thoughts, almost forced into another channel, return to the beloved, who, for a short period, nourished my heart with the greatest joy and happiness. I have

now pasted paper over the panes in order to stop this attractive power. Ah, if I could but thus cover up the name that is engraved in indelible letters upon my heart! Notwithstanding all the advancement of science there has been discovered no means for wiping out a name; yet such a discovery would be worth more to humanity than to observe the transit of Venus or to set out on a North Pole expedition.

March 10th.

Sophia brought me to-day the first violets. How I formerly loved these sweet, fragrant heralds of spring: how I exulted when I saw a number of the modest flowers peeping forth amid the green of the foliage. I was reminded of the wonderful workings of nature, the change of the seasons and their regular return, but:

"Ah, who'll bring me back the happy days,
Bright days of first and ardent love?
Ah, who'll bring me back one hour
Of that glad time again?"

My little window stands wide open, the sun sends in warm beams and they dance and play on the old furniture and change the rough wood to gold. The birds are singing gaily. Renewed life has been given the earth with the return of spring. Will I be awakened from the benumbed state and be born again? I hope so, even if the resurrection should proceed slowly. Jean Paul says: "Suffering is, for a noble soul, like the May frost upon which summer follows; for a base soul it is like the frost of fall which is followed by winter's cold." Would that the former might be the case with me. Or does my soul belong to the latter class? Already my furious struggle against my bitter fortune has been broken; I can now say: perhaps it is best for me that things have turned out so. I shall

probably soon be able to say, with resignation: "What God doeth is well done." I now read daily in my blessed mother's journal. Surely no miner ever sought for gold in his pan with greater eagerness than I seek to draw the pure gold for my soul from the teachings of my sainted mother.

April 2nd.

Day before yesterday three lights were burning in the sitting-room. Jestingly I made the remark that there would soon be a bride in the house, and lo! my prophecy has come true — Olga is the bride.

When I to-day entered the sitting-room, the friend of the house, an elderly pensioned court-counsellor, with little hair, considerable property and countless apertures that once were filled by teeth, sat beside Olga in an attitude expressive of great tenderness. He had laid his thin arm around her lank form. Olga's face glowed a dark purple, her eyes were lowered as if in embarrassment, and she toyed nervously with her bracelet. The godmother stood near by and at my entrance wiped something from her face that might have been a tear — or a grain of snuff — I don't know exactly. I did not know, for the moment, whether to go forward or to retreat, I was so confused. I should have liked best to have sunk through the floor. The godmother assisted me out of my perplexity. With great emphasis, and pointing to the couple, she said:

"Behold a happy bridal pair, Gertrude. The Lord, in His mercy, has bestowed on me a son-in-law. Oh yes! I have always said that, without our efforts, marriages are made in heaven." The bridegroom hereupon stammered something which I did not understand, Olga murmured something which was equally incomprehensible, and I stuttered forth a sort of congratulation, but which might have passed just as well for a condolence. Then the godmother recommenced with great unction: "Yes, the Lord brings glorious

things to pass. Man proposes, but God disposes." While great billows of proverbs were pouring forth from her lips, in no very logical sequence, the bridegroom opened a case. Blinded by the thousand rays that streamed from the brilliants and diamonds that were revealed to view, the godmother stopped suddenly in the middle of a sentence and Olga was startled. I took advantage of the moment when the general attention was attracted by the beautiful jewelry to hasten into the kitchen, where I told Sophia the incredible occurrence. The poor girl, clasping her hands in wonderment, dropped a pot of milk.

May 2nd.

The festival lights are extinguished, the rejoicings are hushed. The newly married pair has left for a wedding journey and will be gone two months. Quiet has been restored and I breathe more easily. The godmother goes each day to her son-in-law's villa, and thus I am left all alone with Sophia and can rest from the fatigue of the recent festival. Solitude has become so sweet to me: it is a necessity.

May 12th.

In consequence of the exertion and the excitement of the last weeks, perhaps also through her stay at the villa, Olga's future home, where all the doors and windows are open and dozens of workmen are engaged in putting on the finishing touches, the godmother has contracted a serious sickness and lies in bed, unable to move a limb, while violent pains attack every part of her body. Care of her occupies my whole time. Only now and then, when sleep has been brought to the sufferer's relief by administering a potion, do I find time to write. But, alas! I cannot find my journal, it has disappeared and all my seeking is in vain. Since the day on which I moved from my garret apartment to the living-room in order to be near the patient, my

journal has been missing. The loss pained me greatly.

To-morrow Olga returns. The godmother longs to see her, and therefore the bridal pair was called home.

May 22nd.

Olga is here: the long-desired meeting has taken place. But the godmother is more depressed than before. Olga came in her new equipage drawn by two dapple-gray horses. She did not come immediately from the depot to her mother's sick-bed, but went first to her home in order to exchange her elegant traveling costume for a still more elegant street toilet. This occupied several hours and occasioned the mother the greatest anxiety. I noticed, with a feeling of indignation, that Olga carefully gathered together her beautiful robe before she approached the bed. A happy smile overspread the pale features, distorted by pain, at sight of the young, charming lady. Olga's face, on the contrary, exhibited neither sad nor joyful agitation. The kiss that she gave her mother on the forehead seemed to be formal and her manner gave me real pain.

"Ah, mamma, how changed you are. The very sight of you deeply moves me," Olga exclaimed. "See, this you have brought on yourself by your unnecessary oversight of the work at the villa and you have spoiled our trip to Paris, which would have proved to me the most interesting and agreeable part of the journey. In Paris, the seat of fashion, I could have procured the things still necessary for completing my wardrobe. O Gertrude," she cried, "give me a smelling-bottle. The atmosphere of the sick-chamber gives me a headache."

I noticed a painful twitching about my godmother's lips; I saw that her eyes filled with tears. What must have passed through her soul in that moment when she experienced the results of her method of training? After Olga had bathed her forehead and her temples with ether and had poured the half of a

bottle of cologne on her handkerchief, she with a careless air seated herself and commenced to describe with great vivacity the incidents of her journey. The features of the great city which had most interested her were the show windows and articles of fashion. She furnished us with a list of the new costumes that she had purchased.

"Do you admire the style in which my hair is arranged, mamma?" she asked, inclining her head. "I had most interesting experiences. I was followed about by the gentlemen, who took me to be a young girl and my husband to be my father! This sometimes provoked him, which greatly amused me. He is jealous, mamma; just think, such an old fool, to play the part of a jealous man, as if men would not pay attention to a young lady. At a certain hotel I received more bouquets than would have been bestowed on an actress of the highest rank and billets doux sufficient to fill a waste-basket! Shall I bring them along with me? Would it amuse you to read them?"

The godmother made no reply: she had closed her eyes and I quickly gave her medicine to revive her. "Ah, I even believe that my recital has depressed my mother," said Olga. "How curious! I thought that it would enliven her. She formerly listened gladly to the stories of my conquests. I must leave now and take an hour in the fresh air. I am sorry that you cannot ride along, mamma. How pleasant it would have been if we, reclining in the cushions, could have aroused the envy of our neighbors. Only take care of yourself so that we can one of these days make a triumphal journey through the streets. To-morrow I can not come to look after you," she said, rising. "Emma Werner is to be married. I must be at the church. I want to see her wedding-gown. Adieu, mamma; sleep well. I had almost forgotten—my husband sends you a greeting."

With that she went into the sitting-room, without

even pressing her mother's hand, arranged her hair very carefully in front of the mirror and departed. She seemed to have forgotten my insignificant person. It only occurred to me after she had left that she had not addressed to me more than the one word, the command to bring her a smelling-bottle.

About an hour afterward the sick woman, who had slumbered for a while, called to me and requested me to sit beside her bed and read a chapter or a Psalm from the Bible.

I immediately complied with her wish. When I had finished I remained sitting for a while beside her. Among other things I remarked that Olga looked very well after her trip. She answered nothing, but wiped the tears from her eyes.

* * *

When I to-day carried the medicine to my godmother, she grasped my hand and in a tone which I had never heard from those lips said: "Gertrude, you are my true daughter, my good child. I have much for which to ask your pardon. I have often been rough and unkind to you. Now, on the threshold of the other world, I recognize by that clear vision which often comes with the approach of death, how full of mistakes my life has been. My faith was strictly orthodox, but dead — it was not accompanied by good works. During the long and painful period which I have spent upon this couch, my faith has been brought to life. My religion was merely formal and legal. Now would have been the opportunity for my faith to bear fruit, but it is too late! O Gertrude, if one could only repair the wrong that one has done! But that is a vain wish. We can do nothing but repent and pray God to forgive us and to be a merciful judge."

Exhausted she sank back after this humble con-

fession into the pillows and closed her eyes for a short slumber.

* * *

Monday Evening.

My soul overflows with emotion. I must cry out: "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" I have just risen from my knees. After having thanked our gracious, loving Father, I hasten to my journal, in order to record my nameless joy.

Richard has returned — he loves me — I am his promised bride. As if he had just dropped from heaven or grown out of the ground, he suddenly stood before me. Without a word of explanation we fell into each other's arms; in our ecstasy we looked into each other's eyes and read how deeply we loved each other. And when I came to my senses and became angry with myself for permitting my joy to overwhelm me instead of punishing Richard for running off by behaving coldly towards him, I sought to tear myself loose from his arms; but the rogue laughed and would not let me go — he said I was his little bride, that he would keep me for all time. He eagerly kissed me, I know not how often; it must have been many times, my cheeks were so hot. I finally managed to change the expression of my face and to dissemble somewhat. I told Richard that my conduct was only due to surprise, fright and friendly affection, aroused by joy at his reappearance, and that such surprises always had abnormal effects on me.

He only laughed at me, however, and gave yet more earnest expression to his love. He whispered in my ear that my coldness was only assumed, that he knew as well as I that I loved him, for he had it "black on white." He then drew out of his pocket a small book, which, to my great astonishment, proved

to be my journal. In the presence of this convincing proof, protest and resistance were of no further avail. To the written confession of my love I added the oral acknowledgement.

"This book," said Richard, handing to me my lost diary, "was the talisman that brought to reason a blinded, jealous heart. Your journal must be held in highest honor. And she who sent it to me deserves our life-long gratitude." I began to understand. Sophia, who knew something of my sorrow over Richard's departure, had secured possession of the book and sent it to Richard.

When I wanted to express my gratitude to her she would not hear of such a thing and said that she had reason to beg my pardon for her underhanded and impertinent meddling. How willingly I forgave her.

Richard told me to-day that he would take me along with him; that the marriage could be celebrated at his father's house, and that we would then go across the ocean. But I replied with all firmness that I could not follow him immediately, much as I should like to do so. I could not leave my godmother until her eyes had closed in death. To leave her would be a loveless, conscienceless act, for which I must reproach myself all my days. Richard finally acknowledged that I was right.

The riddle of the handkerchiefs has been solved. Richard found the one on the street the evening I came home with the doctor, and this miserable piece of linen was the cause of his jealousy, of his flight and of great, unspeakable suffering, which would have resulted in lasting separation had it not been for the interference of Sophia. Sophia means wisdom. She has brought honor to her name. And the other handkerchief? O wonderful dispensation! That was the handkerchief which I gave to that corpulent mass

in the coupe, and this mass of flesh was — Richard's father! Through this kind service I have gained his favor, I shall not be obliged to conquer his heart.

Richard left to-day. It cost me no small self-sacrifice to let him go while I must remain. But —"duty above everything else" has been and shall be my watchword.

June 13th.

My duties in this house have come to an end. The godmother rests in the cool bosom of the earth. To-morrow I leave on the early train for the home of Richard's father. He and Richard will meet me half way, as I learn from a telegram which has just been received. My warm desire, my inmost longing to see Juliana and Walli once more before my marriage and my departure for the new world must remain unfulfilled. Time presses and Richard's return to America can be delayed no longer. It is a bitter sacrifice, but I must without murmuring submit to the inevitable.

* * *

On an early day in June a youthful figure could have been seen in the window of Juliana's small home. It was Walli, who had returned a few days before. As the garden upon which she looked had been raised from its winter sleep and now gloried in its glorious summer array, so also in her had a wonderful change taken place. She no longer needed or used a crutch. She moved about with the activity of a gazelle. The lovely, and formerly so pale, face, was now of a rosy color. A thousand beams of light seemed to stream from her young, blue eyes.

"Walli, Walli!" a bright little voice was suddenly heard to exclaim. "Papa is coming; I see the carriage in the distance," and Ellen flew away at these

words to meet her father, who was returning after an absence of five months in America.

"He comes, he comes," Walli whispered, smiling joyously. "How it arouses me, and I had wanted to be so calm and reasonable. But I will control myself, and will remain true to my resolution not to allow myself to be possessed so wholly by thoughts of this man and thus to lose my peace of heart. Juliana told me yesterday that I must now be more sedate. My illness can no longer serve as an excuse for some things which formerly were allowable in me. I will meet Günter with reserve rather than too cordially. But I feel that I must exercise a fearful power upon myself. O, if I could follow my heart, I would run to meet him as Ellen does. Listen; the noise of the wheels — now — now — the carriage has stopped." She opens the window and leans out. "Günter," she says, but in a suppressed voice. "He is here; he has returned! God be thanked! Now he holds his child in his arms. How his dear face glows with joy! And now his steps are directed hither — he comes." Trembling with joy she flies through the sitting-room, past Juliana, who is engaged in arranging some flowers. She hurries through the door and out into the hallway, almost running into Günter. Forgetting all her good resolutions, Walli stretches out both hands to Günter and lays her head on his breast. But only for a moment. Her face turns crimson as she lifts her blue eyes to his to crave his indulgence. She hurriedly opens the door and leads Günter into the room to Juliana.

Juliana stood motionless for a minute, unable to speak one word of welcome; her trembling hand rested on the table.

Günter smiled, extended both hands to her and said: "Your affright and silence, Juliana, do not

wound me. On the contrary, I imagine this to be favorable to myself and draw the conclusion that my return gives you joy. Great terror and great joy are known to have similar effects on the human heart." "Welcome," Juliana now said. Her voice quivered slightly. She returned with equal warmth the pressure of Günter's hand. "Your conclusion is perfectly true. The joyful surprise at your unexpected arrival was so powerful that I was almost changed to a pillar of salt. But now that the blood flows freely once more through my veins, I pray you to take your old place and to give us an extended account of your voyage. We are naturally quite curious to hear everything; but first of all, whether you are satisfied with the result of your journey?"

"Yes," said Günter, "I am satisfied, thanks to God. This evening I shall inform you of the circumstances — provided, that I may, as formerly, be your guest for an hour each evening?"

"O certainly you may," Juliana heartily answered. "The evenings of happy companionship under the lamplight will now have an end; the heat drives everybody out of the close atmosphere of the room into the open air. Since Walli can again move about the four walls cannot hold her. Is that not true, Walli?"

"O yes, it is as you say," Walli replied, who had made herself busy in the background. She now came forward, seating herself in charming confusion and with drooping eyes, upon a footstool. "An irresistible power drives me out in this glorious weather. I waste many an hour in running about with Ellen while Juliana is busy at home. I am as much a child as Ellen," she laughed, with a shy, momentary glance at Günter. As if her tongue had suddenly been loosened by his friendly and approving smile, she talked on with increasing liveliness. "And think,

Mr. Günter, we run after the butterflies, just as do the boys. Ellen has already a very pretty collection of strange species. Sometimes we come home laden with grasses and all sorts of plants, which we gather with unspeakable patience. Juliana sorts them and throws many, which she says belong to the weed family, out of the window. Ah, what pleasure," she exclaimed with beaming eye, "to roam aimlessly through the woods, or to be rocked in a boat on the clear waves of the Rhine. We use your boat and I am already an expert at rowing." And then a change seemed to occur suddenly in her thoughts. The laughing expression gave place to one more earnest. Rising, she went to Günter, gave him both her hands, and gently said: "And all these pleasures, together with my restored health, I owe, next to God, to you. I have not forgotten that for a moment. I have, alas! nothing but words — and they convey but poorly my deep, indescribably great thankfulness — and my prayers for you and Ellen," she concluded softly and with the deepest emotion.

"I can lay no claim to thanks, Walli," said Günter, visibly moved. "And even were this the case, my richest reward would be my joy at the miracle of your recovery. I am not given to many and beautiful words; I do not possess the gift of expressing my feelings as I should wish to do; just as little can I describe to you my surprise, my joy at the change that has taken place in you. I must ask myself over and over again whether you, the blooming maiden, are identical with the pale, sickly child from whom I took leave several months ago. You must show me your crutch as proof, otherwise I shall not be able to believe. I shall fear that some sort of witchcraft has been at work. Your whole being has undergone a change," he added thoughtfully, as he measured Walli from head to foot with a searching glance.

"But I cannot tell just wherein this change consists."

Walli's face grew crimson. She hastily replied: "The crutch? That is in the attic with the lumber. But if you are such an incredulous Thomas, I will get it. Shall I?" And she turned to go.

"No, let that be," replied Günter, shaking his head. "I have just discovered, in a glance of your eyes, that you are the old Walli. I have been cured completely of my doubt. Now I can be thankful for the trick that my friend played me, by which I was forced to undertake the long journey across the sea and which led to your restoration to health. What are all the sacrifices that I have made, all the disappointments that I have suffered, as compared with the large reward and pleasure which these have brought me?"

"You are very kind," Walli murmured, with tearful eye, bowing her head.

"And how great is that other blessing which has been conferred on me during my absence: namely, Ellen's physical and mental development. You do not believe what torment lay in the thought that Ellen might have inherited the disease which carried her mother off. I am now as happy as if I had no other desire on earth, except that everything might remain, here in this world, as it now is. I need worry no longer about returning to the new world. I have sold my estate and have said farewell to America forever. You cannot get rid of me as your neighbor. My household will, to-morrow, be increased by one: a little colored boy, the son of a faithful slave that belonged to my father, whom I brought along in order that he might receive an education. He will arrive on the next train with my innumerable chests and trunks."

"O, how fine that you can always remain here!" cried Walli in a joyful tone. "Juliana always says

that you will suddenly disappear again, like a Lohengrin, or ——"

"Or that we would move from here," Juliana added, completeing the sentence when Walli, in confusion, paused.

"Move away?" Günter asked, visibly aroused. "For what reason would you leave your native city?"

Juliana informed him of the letter which she had received from her friend in Elberfeld, and added that her decision to accept the offer had been formed long before, but for good reasons had been given up. Since her return from Meran she had received a second letter in which her friend stated that no suitable person had yet been found to assume charge of the school and that she would therefore beg Juliana to take the matter under consideration again. "My friend will remain at her post until summer is ended. I am resolved to take the position then," Juliana concluded in a firm tone.

Günter's countenance had darkened. In a bitter tone he said: "Always a drop of wormwood in the cup of joy. Even this happy hour, when I thought that I had reached the summit of my desires, must be embittered. This is but a miserable, imperfect existence," he sighed.

The evening passed rapidly in listening to each other's exepriences. Much remained to be talked of when ten o'clock struck and Günter rose to leave. Ellen was sleeping on Juliana's lap.

One week after his return Günter came over early in the morning and told Juliana that Ellen had suffered all night with a violent fever and that the physician was of the opinion that scarlet fever, which was epidemic in the neighborhood at that time, would set in. Günter sought Juliana's advice and requested her to procure a reliable deaconess at once. Juliana pondered the matter for a moment, then said calmly:

"Don't worry, Mr. Günter, I will attend to everything for you. I will, for the present, take the oversight myself. In a quarter of an hour, at the longest, I will be over. In the meanwhile tell Ellen that I am coming: that will give her pleasure." Günter's face cleared up immediately and Juliana saw what a burden she had removed from the father's heart. Having intrusted her household affairs to Walli, Juliana hastened to carry out her promise.

The sad news was to Walli like lightning out of a clear sky. Ellen was sick, and would probably be confined to her bed and her room for a long time. She would be as little able to reach Ellen as if a sea divided them. This thought rested heavily upon her. Now she must not only give up Ellen's pleasant companionship, but also Günter's accustomed visits, which had become so dear to her. It seemed to her unkind on Juliana's part to exclude her from all the labor connected with the care of Ellen, and to treat her, notwithstanding her eighteen years, like an irresponsible child. Something like anger and jealousy against Juliana rose within her, as she thought of Juliana sitting in pleasant conversation with Günter and winning in still larger measure the latter's gratitude and admiration.

"O, what contemptible thoughts and feelings are these," she exclaimed, suddenly rising from her place. "Like serpents, they have crept in, they have ensnared and enveloped me, they have contracted my heart and at the same time poisoned it. Pfui on me!" she continued, stamping her foot on the floor, "to sit here and to cry and to allow unimpeded entrance into my heart to resentment and envy! How ashamed must I be in the presence of Juliana, if she knew what thoughts have passed through my mind, if she suspected that I begrudged her the office of nurse! I will make right the wrong that I have done her, I will

surprise her with her favorite dish when she comes to take her dinner. Yesterday I received some money for my needle-work." With these words she rattled the bunch of keys which she carried, and with an air of importance went into the kitchen where Margaret was.

"Margaret, I will arrange the bill of fare to-day," she said, with womanly charm and dignity. "During the absence of the mistress, the control of the household has been committed to me. These keys are my credential. I now propose to exercise my power by commanding you to prepare the favorite dish of our absent Juliana. Sauerkraut and a leg of mutton we will have."

"Sauerkraut and leg of mutton!" Margaret exclaimed. "Wallichen, I never took you to be so ignorant in the art of cookery. No, such foolishness I never heard in all my days, not even from Lise, and she was a goose," and then she laughed until the tears rolled down her face. "Leg of mutton and sauerkraut! At eleven o'clock!"

"But, Margaret," cried Walli, pouting, "you forget who I am. I want you to tell me what there is stupid and foolish about the suggestion that we have sauerkraut and mutton?"

"Little heart, there is nothing foolish about the suggestion that we have sauerkraut or that we have mutton," rejoined Margaret, with difficulty restraining her laughter and wiping away the tears with her apron. "But it is foolish to begin to cook sauerkraut at eleven o'clock—not to speak of the leg of mutton—when dinner is to be served at twelve. Sauerkraut, my little heart, requires two or three hours. You must not get angry with an old cook, such as I am, because your notions appear so funny to me. I am only wondering that you did not order a goose killed and ready by twelve o'clock. O," she added, closing the kitchen

door, "I hope that nobody has heard? I believe that if a suitor for your hand had heard the conversation he would have faced about and gone off! No, Wallichen, you could not marry with such inexperience."

"Marry!" exclaimed Walli, who now broke out into a loud laugh. "O, Margaret, now we are quits. You have said something equally foolish as you took my suggestion in cookery to be. Now my turn has come to laugh at you. I marry! Did ever anybody hear anything so exceedingly nonsensical? Adieu; I will not interfere in your domain, cook whatever you please. But from to-morrow forward, and as a punishment for your ridicule of me, you shall have me as a pupil in cooking. Before many weeks have passed you shall have no further reason to laugh at me." With these words, energetically delivered, Walli hastened into the sitting-room. But Margaret, with a knowing, self-satisfied smile, said to herself:

"We shall see whether my remark about a marriage was so foolish! I have not been standing on my head. I have a fine scent in such matters. I prophesied three weeks before that my old father would die, and I prophesy now that there will soon be a bride in the house. It might prove to be Fräulein Juliana. She would be more suitable than that child, which indeed blooms as a rose, but—as the doctor told Fräulein Juliana—would have a return of her former illness if she were unduly excited or should contract a severe cold. But God forbid this and grant that the suitor soon present himself. The fine, noble American will do well with either: each is, in her way, as excellent and desirable as the other. Now let me finish cooking the soup, instead of standing here lost in thought," and she began to stir vigorously in the soup-kettle. "Truly, it was high time for me to be about my business, the soup would soon have been scorched."

A strange procession could have been observed

in Günter's garden about fourteen days later: a child, reclining on pillows in a wheel-chair; a colored boy, who carefully chased away with a large fan the troublesome flies and kept the warm rays of the sun with a yellow parasol; Günter and Juliana, guiding the chair, and Marco, the Newfoundland, running beside the chair and expressing his joy at the recovery of his little mistress by lively barking. Ellen's pale face was bright with smiles. To those accompanying her she addressed a kind word or gave a pressure of the hand. Marco she gently fondled, and he in return would lick her hand. The eyes, appearing larger and darker on account of the thin, pale face, sought most of all the eye of the faithful Juliana. The little head was turned backward every minute in order the better to see her.

Since her illness Ellen's affection for Juliana had grown almost to idolatrous love; a thousand ties bound the youthful heart to her nurse. Ellen could not hear of Juliana's return into her own home and to Walli, notwithstanding the many duties that there demanded her attention. On this day Ellen had finally heeded the representations that reason dictated should be made to her and had promised Juliana that she would act sensibly and not cry when the former turned over her office to the deaconess who had been in attendance and later to a relative who was expected. At Juliana's suggestion he had written to a cousin, an elderly, single woman, and asked her to remain with him for some time. This lady took great pleasure in complying with his request. A great source of worry as to the welfare of Günter and Ellen was thus removed from Juliana. During her temporary residence in Günter's house she had observed many faults in the system of house-keeping there in vogue; she saw how many valuable things were going to ruin while the master of the house had no suspicion of it. Juliana considered it her duty to draw Günter's attention to the condition of his house-

hold and to urge upon him the necessity of securing an approved, elderly woman who would prove to be not only a reliable guardian of the house, but also a motherly and faithful protectress for Ellen. Günter had shaken his head at this and ventured for the first time to request Juliana to give up her purpose of taking charge of the school in Elberfeld in order that she might remain for Ellen's sake. But he found her firm in the resolution which she had formed and had suddenly ceased from further argument in response to a peculiarly entreating glance from Juliana. He had since then not returned to the subject, but immediately sent for his cousin. The day fixed for her arrival had come. Ellen, who was completely restored to health, was to accompany her father in the carriage to the depot. The carriage was already standing in front of the door, when a verbose telegram was received from her expressing her great sorrow at being compelled to postpone her journey indefinitely, inasmuch as a friend, whom she had not seen in a long time, had unexpectedly come and would remain for some weeks, or even months. Ellen's joy over the news showed how unwilling she was to have this intended new mother placed over her. Günter, on the contrary, was greatly disappointed, and, as was his wont when his feelings were greatly aroused, shut himself up in his room for several hours.

Walli was standing, towards evening, at the bedroom window and, from behind the flower pots, observed Günter as he paced restlessly to and fro in his garden and seemed to be buried in thought, as one oppressed with care or engaged in considering a matter of great importance. Juliana was occupied in the kitchen, canning fruit. Ellen suddenly ran up the steps, hurrying breathless to Juliana, and with great demonstration of joy, exclaimed:

"She did not come, the old lady, and is not ex-

pected for some time. I am very glad, for I know that I could never love her, the old cousin! However, I am sorry on papa's account. He is much stirred up about it. He shut himself up in his room. I followed him and comforted him, telling him not to be sorry and worried, but to leave the old cousin where she is, and then—then I begged him again, as I have done often before, that he would give me you, you golden, sweet Juliana, for a mamma."

"Ellen!" Juliana cried and pressed her trembling hand upon the girl's mouth. But Ellen sprang aside and fled into the corner of the room, saying: "Yes, I have begged him, and this time,"—she clapped her hands together—"this time papa has promised to fulfill my request. He is no doubt considering now what he will say to you; he has been in the garden for over an hour and all alone. See, there he goes," she exclaimed, pointing to the garden, where Günter's tall form suddenly appeared. "To-morrow he will come to you. Juliana," she added in her sweetest and most caressing tone, nestling close to Juliana, who sat unmovable as a statue with her head supported in her hand, "will you not say 'yes' when he asks you, you dear, sweet little mamma? O, then I shall no longer be an orphan, and papa will not be so forlorn, and we shall not need to take any old cousins into the house, and everything will be so pleasant — and then I shall know that the dear God hears our prayers, for I pray to Him every day, morning and night, that He would so dispose affairs that I might be your child." With a happy smile Ellen laid her little head on Juliana's breast, in the sweet confidence that she had found a second mother. Juliana, overwhelmed by her feelings, remained silent; pressing the child to her breast, she gave herself up to the sweet joy that poured in upon her, a joy that was inexpressible and which she had

never held to be possible, a joy announced to her by a child's lips.

In forgetfulness of the whole world and in sweet dreaming she tasted for a short period the happiness, which, she knew, she must nevertheless lose forever in the same moment in which it would be offered to her. She did not feel strong enough to reject the full and sparkling cup untouched: she was only a woman! But—she would sip the rich contents—and then—then would she give them up to another. As one dying, who knows that he soon must say farewell to the world, rests his eye once more on the purple glow of the evening sun, once more looks with longing eye upon the glorious, paradisaical earth, so only did she yield herself to the enjoyment of a treasure which she had firmly resolved not to seize, not to make her own, but to renounce. We will leave her, undisturbed, to the highest joy and the greatest torment of a woman's soul, fighting the noblest, most glorious fight of self-sacrifice. The eye of God sees into this small, quiet room, His hand takes up the pen in order to record in His book the name of a child of His who has renounced a crown and chosen the cross, closed its eye to the most attractive promises which the future can hold out and elected to walk, solitary and alone, the path of duty! "The reward of such as these shall be in heaven."

Juliana sat, on the following morning, in the living-room and waited for Ellen to come at the usual hour. But instead of the light, springing step of the child, a firm and manly tread was heard in the hall. Her face flushed, her heart threatened to stand still. As if struggling for air, she took a deep breath, her form trembled. Suddenly she arose, pressed her hands firmly upon her breast and said softly, with an entreating glance upward: "God, be with me," then in a firm tone called, "Come," and Günter entered.

Günter's face bore the impress of great earnest-

ness. His features testified to a sleepless night and violent internal conflicts. His usually clear eye, from which his good humor streamed forth in a thousand rays, was dim; his voice, while unspeakably tender and earnest, was somewhat hoarse and weary.

"My visit surprises you, Fräulein Juliana? Am I a troubler? But pray, in your goodness of heart let mercy prevail over justice, and devote this hour to the father instead of to his child. Will you, as you have invariably done, lend your ear to a petition?"

"Most willingly," Juliana replied, smiling. Having offered Günter a chair, she seated herself opposite to him, then sank her head as one who awaits a blow but does not feel sufficiently strong to meet it with open eye.

"You know, Juliana," Günter began in a nervous tone, "that you have come to be indispensable to my Ellen. I have learned to know your real worth and come now—"

"I know everything, stop; say nothing further," Juliana cried. "I suspect the reason of your visit, I know your petition, but I cannot fulfill it—it is impossible. Demand any sacrifice, demand my heart-blood for your child, I would willingly give it; but I can do nothing else." She spoke rapidly but tremblingly. For ah! Günter's presence, his eye, the melody of his voice exerted a bewitching power upon her, before which all her firm resolutions threatened to give way. She wavered. A voice said: "Take the joy now offered!" She felt that she was a woman, that love, as a mighty enemy to duty, had risen in her soul and was struggling for the victory. "You are a noble man, Mr. Günter," she recommenced wearily, after she had regained her composure. "In this moment I realize your full worth, when, for the sake of your child, you offer the warm feelings of your heart as a sacrifice upon the altar of duty."

"As a sacrifice?" Günter exclaimed in astonishment.

"Yes, as a sacrifice," Juliana answered calmly and firmly. "Do you think that my eye does not read upon your countenance the traces of the battle which this visit has cost you?" she asked with a painful smile. "Do you think that I cannot distinguish the expression of resignation and of internal calm when one has gained a victory over his ego, from the glowing brightness that shines forth upon one's face when the heart has attained the longed-for goal? You come to offer me your heart, when it belongs wholly to another."

"Stop," cried Günter, meeting fully and openly Juliana's searching gaze. "You are laboring under a great mistake if you think that only a sense of duty has led me hither. No, Juliana, that is not true. In the first place, I do not possess the character of a sacrificing Abraham, of a self-denying martyr, and secondly, my whole nature would rebel against bringing to Ellen a mother who did not possess all my affection. Your modesty has blinded you, Juliana," he continued earnestly, grasping Juliana's right hand, "otherwise you must long since have recognized that you are very dear and precious to me. I think of life at your side as something highly desirable. You will be the good spirit of my barren household. The passionate fire of youth may not appear in me, but my love is not the less deep. As I loved my Jane, one loves but once—"

"O no, no," Juliana interrupted, "you are mistaken, Günter. Your heart is still capable of a second, equally deep and warm love. Your love for your Jane has risen as the phoenix out of its ashes. Walli has wrought this miracle! Is it possible," she continued without interruption, while Günter's eyes rested upon her as if a revelation were being made

to him, "that you are really in the dark as to your own heart; that you live in the belief that I, I am the object of your love? I know well that I am dear to you, but the love which you offer to me is to that which you feel towards Walli as night to day, as the pale moon to the bright sun. Your affection for me is of a purely friendly nature. Earnestly examine your heart, my dear friend, after I have removed the bandages from your eyes, and then if you feel that your heart really belongs whole and undivided to me, then return and ask me again to be yours. But I know, Günter," she added with a smile that was almost supernatural, while her breast rose and fell convulsively, "I know—that you will not return again."

"Juliana," Günter cried in a tone that sounded as though his soul were set free from some heavy weight, "I believe that you are right. You are omniscient. Yes, you have understood my feelings better than I myself understood them. I have been wandering and groping in darkness. Juliana, you are the most exalted woman on earth. It seems presumptuous for me to lift my thought to you. But listen to my further explanation and know that cold calculation has not been the motive of my coming to you, but that from the first I have had a real affection for you as well as the highest esteem.

"In the first hour in which I saw you and Walli, both of you impressed me with a power which I could not escape and which influenced my life. A deep and warm affection took root in my heart. With our closer intercourse, this affection for both of you increased in equal measure, although in a different manner in each case. When I saw you, when I heard the sweet tones which you called forth from your organ, when I looked into your eyes which betrayed the depths of your soul, it seemed as though the

solemn vesper-bells were ringing—a great peace and quiet took possession of my soul. When I heard Walli's silvery laugh, when I looked into the sweet depths of her child-eyes and through these into a pure, innocent child-heart — then the blood coursed more warmly through my veins, I felt as though I must take the gentle creature in my arms and defend her against the dangers and the storms of life. As our acquaintance grew more intimate, my soul became a prey to the most tormenting doubts. How often I have directed my steps hither in order to ask for your hand and thus end all indecision, being convinced that my heart belonged to you and that the feelings which I cherished for Walli had their source only in compassion with the heavily afflicted child and in a paternal desire for her welfare. Then I found Walli instead of you and in her gentle presence I forgot the object of my visit and returned home without having accomplished my purpose. Finally I grew ashamed of my vacillation, and that was not the least of my sorrows. Generally so energetic and resolute where it was necessary to attain a proposed goal, built of stern stuff, arrived at the period of life when reason is wont to be in the ascendant, I had suddenly become a wavering reed. I determined to end the whole matter by asking you, Juliana, whose conduct towards me gave me hope, for your hand. Ellen's illness delayed matters, but your quiet influence in my house, my child's entreaties and the pressure of my own heart decided me to execute my long postponed resolution. I acknowledge to you now, Juliana — I will make a complete confession — that I did not, even at this point, carry out my former determination without a last, bitter struggle. And in the moment when my conflict was ended and I had decided to ask you, the image of Walli, in all her attractiveness, appeared before me,

and I should probably not have remained firm if I had not scolded myself for a fool, who, at forty years of age, with hair growing gray, could even think of the possibility of marrying a girl hardly past the border of childhood and who could only love me as a daughter loves her father," he concluded in a tone of sad resignation.

"You are mistaken, Günter," Juliana said. "You are mistaken," she repeated. "Walli loves you with the mighty first love of a young, pure girl's heart."

The strong man trembled. He added: "Is it true, is it really true?"

"Yes," Juliana answered, smiling gently. "It is really true. In the first moment, when you stood before her in this room, a great change took place in her. Unsuspectingly, unconscious of the true nature of her feelings, she long since confessed to me her love for you. But this love still rests in the depth of her soul: it is for you to open the door of her heart and to draw forth this love. At the time when Walli gave me a view of her heart, the knowledge thus obtained occasioned me a nameless woe—but—"

"Juliana!" Günter cried in a tone of astonishment and admiration, "is it possible that you—"

"St!" Juliana interrupted, pointing to the door of the adjoining room, "she might hear. *That* is past — that was a rainbow, glowing in its bright and beautiful colors, disappearing as rapidly as it shone forth. Let us consider that as buried and keep afar from the child every shadow that might becloud her youthful joy. I will now bring Walli in to you. Grant me the pleasure of leading to you your future bride. This is the most beautiful and most exalted moment of my life."

The door softly opened, Juliana had passed through, Walli entered. She held her needle-work in her hand. After cordially greeting Günter, as was

her custom, she seated herself upon the sofa. Both kept silence: Günter, filled with joyful expectation, unable to speak; Walli, awaiting some communication from Günter, too modest to inquire what his mission might be. That it must be something of importance she read on Juliana's agitated countenance. After a hurried glance at Günter, Walli dropped her eyes and proceeded with her work. Günter regarded her with unspeakable tenderness: but it seemed to him like an impossibility to be loved by such a creature. Suddenly Walli, in a mischievous vein, and with a fleeting upward glance, said:

"What you have to say to me, Mr. Günter, can not be so important after all, as Juliana affirmed; you seem to be in no haste?"

"I am speechless, Walli; the measure of my feelings is full to overflowing," said Günter, and his sonorous voice trembled with repressed emotion. Walli lifted her head and regarded Günter with a surprised expression. As if blinded by the light that poured out of his eyes, her head sank upon her breast. She let her needle-work fall; she sprang forward to pick it up, but Günter's hand was firmly laid upon her weak arm — with gentle force he drew her back to her place, and grasping both hands, said in the softest tone which he could command:

"Walli, you know that I am not a maker of fine phrases. I therefore ask you, without further preliminaries: is it really true, as Juliana has told me, that you love me and that you would cheerfully consent to become my wife? Is it true?"

Walli's large eyes looked fearlessly into Günter's face. "If Juliana has said it, then it is certainly true," she responded in her quiet, childlike way. "O yes, I love you, and I will become yours, as I have been so long, ah! so long in my heart. But I can never

understand how you have come to choose me; I am only a child."

Instead of replying the strong man threw his arm around her and drew her gently to his breast.

"Walli, my dear, sweet, little Walli," Günter softly whispered, and then tenderly kissed the clear, high forehead. Walli, freeing herself, anxiously asked in her innocent childishness: "Juliana is not here; will she allow me to become your bride?"

"She has already granted her permission," said Günter, smiling. "Juliana is responsible for our happiness; let us never forget that."

"O, how could I forget it," Walli answered. "But you will not forget the dear God, you will be thankful to Him and implore His blessing?"

"Yes; I will certainly do that, Walli."

"And after I am your wife — O Walter — if you have only not been too hasty, if I can be a suitable substitute for your Jane. It seems to me that Juliana would have suited so much better and would have made a far more faithful mother than I for Ellen. I fear that Ellen will not be able to love me as her mamma."

"Certainly she will," Günter said in a confident tone. "Her little heart is already devoted to you."

"Yes, but as to a sister. Ah, Günter, from now on you will have two children, the one large, the other small," she sighed.

"I have no fear," laughed Günter. "The large and reasonable child will soon know how to be the dignified mother and housewife and how to win respect for herself and bring a blessing into my house."

"God must give me the power for this," Walli said earnestly; "for otherwise a home can never prosper. It shall be my effort to walk in the footsteps of your Jane. You must take me, however, as I am."

While these two, in such sweet conversation, forgot the outside world and Juliana, the latter lay on her knees in her bedroom, the door of which she had locked. Her face was buried in her hands. Only an occasional sigh indicated that there was life in the bowed form. At last she raised her head, the eyes were turned upward, the hands were folded, the lips moved; softly, but distinctly, she prayed:

"Lord, Who dwellest in my heart, be with me;
Thou gracious shield, be with me;
And when I grow despairing, be with me.
But that I boldly may contend,
O Thou my comfort, strength and joy,
Until the end of days, be with me."

When she had finished, she arose, washed away the tears from her eyes, smoothed her hair and entered the adjoining room. Walli sprang up from her seat and threw herself on Juliana's breast.

"O Juliana, I am so happy," she whispered amid her tears. "But I should be so much happier if I did not feel so unworthy. And you have no objection to make if your Walli becomes a bride and you will not be angry because I, without asking you, and entirely of my own accord, promised Günter to become his wife? O Juliana, tell me that I am fitted to undertake this great responsibility and that there has been no lack of conscientiousness and no presumption on my part in assuming such sacred duties. Only when you have assured me can I be perfectly happy."

"You need not fear, Walli, you may give yourself up to this new happiness without any worry," Juliana said lovingly, while she gently stroked Walli's glowing cheeks. "Your hesitation is a proof that you regard your duties with becoming earnestness. With God's gracious help, and with firm and earnest will you can soon enough equip yourself fully for your new position. Be of good cheer."

"O, now I am perfectly happy," cried Walli in a jubilant tone. "I could wish nothing more."

* * * * *

On a glorious July morning the steamer "Ehrenfels" proudly ploughed the waters of the Rhine. The air was mild and gaily the waves danced; the heavens were a clear, deep blue. At the bow of the boat stood Walli, near Günter's side. Juliana was seated, with Ellen, some distance away. Walli's eyes rested for a moment upon the pleasant river, then roved to the laughing shore with its ever-changing pictures, then sought Günter's eye to give expression to thankfulness for this happy day. The trip to Königswinter and the Drachenfels had been one of the desires of Walli's life for many years. To-day, the anniversary of her birth, Günter had gratified her desire. Walli was on this occasion more cheerful than usual; only now and then she would have periods of silence.

Since the day on which Juliana had brought Walli to him Günter had lived for his betrothed alone. Every hour, every moment in her presence, was an event; every glance, every word, was a treasure which he preserved in his heart. His character, naturally mild and tender, but easily aroused and even violent, had lost everything passionate, although even now he displayed none of the languishing love of a silly bridegroom. Since that beautiful day when she had promised her hand to Günter, a peculiar consecration seemed to have possessed Walli.

She was most happy, that much everybody could read upon her countenance; but she was also filled with gratitude, ever regarding her happiness as something wholly undeserved. She now grasped in all their fullness the duties divinely assigned to her as second wife and mother; yet, while she seemed more mature and more dignified, her childlikeness had not suffered.

Since the hour when Juliana had told Ellen that Walli, and not she, would be her future mamma, a great change had occurred in her. Günter, in his joy, had not taken note of this. Walli, however, with her sensitive nature, had immediately felt it, and this feeling cast a shadow over her happiness. But Walli said nothing; she felt that it would be better not to discuss the matter, but to leave the solution to the future. Ellen, since she had learned the news, had been shy and reserved in her conduct towards Walli. Her kisses seemed to be formal and not to spring from a spontaneous desire of the heart. The sweet name "mamma" had not once passed the child's lips. To Walli's special efforts at cordiality and tenderness Ellen opposed a certain passivity. The child sought to escape from her presence upon the least plausible pretext, and would sit alone for hours in her garden. Even towards Juliana she was less confidential and often avoided her. The child's transformation occasioned Juliana deep pain. Several times she had tried, in her kind and loving way, to learn from Ellen the true reason for her conduct, but in this she had been unsuccessful. One day, however, when she had described the sorrow that this conduct occasioned Walli and how it would pain her father if he knew of it, the little heart melted. Ellen burst into tears, threw her arms around Juliana's neck and then, between her sobs, told Juliana how stubborn and jealous her little heart had grown to be. She acknowledged that she had grown angry with her father because he had not kept his promise to ask Juliana to become her mamma, and she could not forgive Juliana for not wanting to be her mamma, and she could not love Walli as her mother, because Hannah, the cook, had said that the delicate creature would not grow old, and that there would soon be another funeral in the house. But Ellen did not want to become attached to a mamma who would soon be carried

to her grave; this would cause her as much sorrow as when her first mamma died.

Only after much patient effort did Juliana succeed in dispelling these false ideas, which the malicious statement of the old servant had only confirmed. Juliana showed the little girl that her father could not fulfill his promise because God had willed otherwise. Ellen finally promised her that she would never, by a single word, hurt Walli; because this might cause Walli's death, and then her papa could never be happy. Ellen promised to keep quiet and to exert herself to put aside her shy behavior. This very morning Ellen —of course not of her own heart's prompting, but at Juliana's request—had given Walli a beautiful bouquet. But the name "mamma," for which Walli's heart pined, though it had trembled a moment on the child's lips, had not been spoken.

"Of what were you thinking just now, Walli?" asked Günter after having watched for a long time and in silent rapture the play of thought upon her countenance, as he observed a look of pain succeed the smile that had been there.

"You will laugh at me, Walter, when I tell you that I was thinking again of Gertrude Vane in Bulwer's splendid romance. Since I have been on the Rhine, her image, strange to say, has repeatedly forced itself upon my attention. We decidedly resemble the lovers described in that work. You are a man of power, as was Trevilian, and I such a tender thing as was Gertrude. There is only this difference: I have fully recovered from my suffering and am seated at your side in the enjoyment of the glories of nature, while Gertrude was filled with the foreboding of approaching death, separation from her betrothed came nearer each moment."

"Let us to-day, beneath the clear azure of the sky, entertain no such sorrowful, fantastic thoughts, child,"

said Günter, lovingly. "Do not forget that Gertrude and Trevilian were children of the imagination, fictitious characters, which should claim our attention only while we are reading the romance in which they play a part."

"You are right, Walter," Walli assented; "just scold me, I deserve it for having cast a shadow over this golden day. I will make a full confession. The thought has several times occurred to me to-day that my joy is too great for this earth and that therefore it cannot prove to be of long duration. But just as much as I love you, so little do I fear death; death has no terrors for me. I have often felt it near and have not trembled. During the years of my illness I was really homesick for the eternal house of God and often wept bitterly when after the physician had predicted my speedy death, my life was spared. Of course now, when I must leave you behind, separation would be hard for me. I would prefer not to die before you have learned to believe in and love the Savior. O Walter, will that time ever come?"

"I do not know. I can just as little as the first time when you put this question to me answer 'yes', although I do not know of any other desire of yours which I would more like to fulfill," was Günter's reply, given after brief meditation. "But let us hope that your conversation and example will win me to your faith. Your gentleness has already wrought a great change in my violent and excitable nature. Have patience, dear girl, and imitate God's long suffering. See," he said, pointing to the houses of a city that now became visible; "there is Königswinter, our destination. Be bright and cheerful, my love, and let us spend the day in unalloyed pleasure."

Günter offered Walli his arm and led her to Juliana, who was engaged in smoothing Ellen's disordered locks. The little girl had just awakened from sleep

and was hungry for breakfast. Our excursionists landed immediately and breakfasted on the balcony of a near-by hotel. After they had visited the ruins, which had a particular attraction for Walli on account of the touching legend of faithful love connected with them, the small party took a boat and in half an hour had reached the opposite side of the river, to Königswinter. Here the noon-day meal was eaten. Walli had sprained her foot during the descent from the ruins but had heroically concealed her pain until now, in order not to mar the happiness of the day. But when the meal had been ended and Günter proposed that they prepare to ascend the Drachenfels, there remained nothing for her but to acknowledge her misfortune. But she requested them not to postpone the pleasant trip on her account, since she could occupy the time in drawing. Günter, however, would not listen to this. To ascend the mountain would afford him no pleasure, he said, if Walli must stay behind. He therefore set about finding a way for conveying Walli to the summit. He went at once to hire a donkey for Walli to ride. He soon returned with the news that all the long-eared quadrupeds were engaged by a large party of Englanders. The trip would then and there have been abandoned had not Ellen cried bitterly because of her sore disappointment. She implored her father to permit her to make the ascent with Juliana if it would give him no pleasure to go along. Günter, with a fleeting glance at Juliana that was expressive of pain, hastily said:

"I will go along, and gladly." After he had found Walli a place in the garden, which commanded a view of the Rhine and the Drachenfels, and having taken a hearty leave of her, he followed the other two who had already set forth to climb the mountain.

Walli might have been sitting for more than an hour, in total forgetfulness of the outward world, gaz-

ing upon the glorious prospect which her talented hand rapidly sketched, when loud laughter and the sound of many voices and of different languages aroused her. She saw a number of donkeys bearing a number of ladies of all ages, chiefly from among the daughters of Albion. Walli applied herself more attentively to her work as the cavalcade passed. A sharp, well-known voice, however, caused her to raise her head involuntarily. She looked up into the eyes of Günter's former governess. The latter, with a malicious expression, measured her from head to foot. Madamoiselle Jeanette went on foot and led by the hand a small child, whose governess she seemed to be. When the company, consisting of not fewer than thirty persons, had passed and disappeared in the inn, Walli recommenced her drawing, but again looked up when a shadow fell upon her work and a shrill voice said:

"All alone? Where is Fräulein Juliana?" This was spoken in a curt tone. The malicious expression on her countenance gave way to a smile, and in her sweetest tone and with hypocritical friendliness the governess added:

"But what a miracle! You have no crutch! You have recovered! I am amazed! When I left Cologne I did not expect to see you again, you were so pale and wretched. But you are charming. You bloom as the rose. And where is your friend, Mr. Günter? Where you are he cannot be far away."

"No, not far," Walli replied in a friendly tone, quickly deceived by the hypocritical cordiality of the French governess. "My betrothed has gone to the Drachenfels with Juliana and Ellen."

"Your betrothed?" exclaimed the governess in a tone of surprise. Her smile gave place to an expression of restless expectation as she inquired: "Who is your betrothed?"

"Mr. Günter," Walli answered, blushing when the

name passed her lips, at the same time dropping her eyes. She thus missed the rapid change on the face of the governess as well as the demoniacal expression in her green eyes.

Wondering at the silence of the governess, Walli lifted her eyes and in her childlike ingenuousness, said:

"Has it surprised you to learn that Mr. Günter is my betrothed?"

The French woman gave a sharp laugh and nervously opened and closed her fan. "Surprised?" she exclaimed in a saracstic tone. "O no! It could be foreseen that Mr. Günter would lose his heart to one of you. I had thought," she continued with sharp emphasis, "that Fräulein Juliana would be his second wife. But why did not you go along to the Drachenfels?" she concluded, seating herself beside Walli.

Walli said that her sprained ankle had compelled her to give up the walk.

"Little fool!" exclaimed the governess with a wicked laugh, at the same time tapping Walli on the hand with her fan. "To sit here and let your intended go alone with Juliana! Are you not jealous?"

"Jealous?" repeated Walli, dwelling upon the word as if she sought to grasp its meaning. Then she asked: "Of whom should I be jealous?"

"O, what innocence!" exclaimed the governess. "Of whom else than of Fräulein Juliana? You must know as well as I and all the world that Fräulein Juliana loves Mr. Günter and has always nourished the hope of becoming his wife some day?"

Walli gazed with speechless amazement at the speaker, while a suspicion arose in her that there might be some truth in the words. A hundred small circumstances suddenly crowded upon her memory. To these she had attached no importance, but in the light of the information just given the suspicion became a certainty. At the same time a great sorrow filled her

soul. Her happiness had been purchased at the price of the highest sacrifice on the part of Juliana.

"O! I hope that I have not destroyed your day's pleasure?" said the French woman in a tone of pretended sympathy. "I would not be so sad. It was only a bit of pleasantry. And even if Madamoiselle Jule loves Mr. Günter, oh well! she will not die, she is such a noble lady, a veritable angel, as Mr. Günter has often assured me," she tittered sneeringly. "She would have proved a more suitable mamma for Ellen than you, my little child, that much Mr. Günter himself can see. But you are younger and more beautiful, and these things weigh heavily with the men. Ah!" she added with a sigh and with a theatrical upward glance of her eyes, uninterrupted by Walli, who sat like a statue, staring into vacancy. "My dear friend Jane, Mr. Günter's first wife will soon be forgotten. And yet he promised her on her dying bed that he would never introduce into the house a stepmother for Ellen."

Walli was starting out of her apathy. "Did he promise her that?" she cried with an expression of terror, pressing her hand upon her heart.

"Yes, certainly," rejoined the governess with a sigh, assuming a most serious expression of countenance; "and in my presence. I will relate the whole occurence to you, if it interests you."

Walli nodded in the affirmative and supported her head in her hand.

"About a week before the death of Jane, who was as dear to me as a sister, she sent one evening for Mr. Günter. I sat at the window of her bed-room in a niche covered by a heavy damask curtain. I had slept awhile, feeling exhausted. Mr. Günter's voice aroused me. He was in conversation with his wife. I heard her when she said: 'O Walter, with a heavy heart do I bid farewell to the beautiful earth. I have been so happy at

your side. One thing, however, would ease me; if you would promise not to forget me for another, and not to give Ellen a stepmother. This is a selfish wish, but it springs from the deepest, warmest love for you and for our child. Therefore pardon me for expressing it!' Günter gave his wife his hand and said in his tenderest tone: 'If this promise will relieve you of a burden, my darling, I will make it with a joyful heart. To keep the promise will not be difficult; I know that I can never love another woman as I have loved you.' She thanked him and thenceforth spoke of death with touching resignation. She died in peace, believing that her husband would keep his word. Instead, thou poor deceived one," the governess sighed with a look to heaven, "thy husband has broken his word and—is again engaged."

Walli sat motionless, speechless. Her heart grew cold. She trembled. She felt like crying, but was ashamed to shed a tear in the presence of the governess. The latter feasted herself on the anguish which she had created in the poor girl's mind. She recognized in the comfortless expression on Walli's face that she had accomplished her purpose, that she had avenged herself for her dismissal from Günter's house and for the annihilation of her hopes, the cause of all which she thought to have discovered in Walli, the innocent child. Rising, she said in her sweetest tone, as if expressing sympathy, yet with a touch of humor:

"I believe that my narrative has pained you? You make such a sorrowful face. It grieves me deeply, I had not thought that you were so sensitive. Forget the story, or better—break your engagement, upon which no blessing can ever rest." With a bow she turned to go, humming a bright melody the while.

Walli was unable to reply, unable to move even. She was like one benumbed; the last words made her feel as though a stream of ice-cold water had been poured out upon her. Suddenly she sprang up and

with trembling hand gathered her drawing materials together. She could not remain quiet, she felt that she must escape from the garden into the freedom beyond. Her injured foot forced a cry of pain from her lips. She was the more determined that the injured member should obey her will and carry her away as rapidly as possible. But whither? "To Günter," her heart replied. "Yes, to Günter," her lips softly repeated. "One glance into his dear, honest eyes will suffice to disperse all the strange feelings of anxiety, doubt and fear which the conversation with this governess has awakened. All? Ah no, only what concerned his promise to Jane. For how could he, this man of noble, upright character, of the most severe ideas of honesty, be capable of breaking his word?" Completely absorbed by these thoughts, altogether oblivious of the surrounding world, she bravely proceeded, or rather limped, on the road which a boy had indicated as leading to the Drachenfels. With true heroism she suppressed the cries of pain that rose to her lips. Although she had now begun the ascent, her progress became more rapid in proportion, as her longing to see Günter increased. She called herself a fool for becoming so incapable of word or action at the statements made by the governess, instead of calmly defending her betrothed. "If Günter knew that I had for a single moment doubted him! He must not know of it, to tell him would be equivalent to an accusation and would wound his manly pride! Ah!" she continued sadly in her soliloquy, when she had rested a few minutes and taken breath, "if I could only drive that other report out of my mind. But I feel that it is true, that it is a fact which cannot be banished as a piece of sophistry. The eye of the governess, sharpened by jealousy and envy, has noticed what I had failed to observe, and now that she has opened my eyes, many things which I did not understand are made plain to me. How powerfully Juliana was moved that evening when I communicated to her

the servant's gossip. How deeply affected she was on that ever memorable day when she bade me enter the living room to meet Günter. The expression on her countenance was not that of joy and happiness, but of resignation and of victory of soul, when a great sacrifice has been offered for the sake of another's happiness. And now I know the reason for her frequent weeping, for her heavy sighs during the night, when she thought that I was asleep. Yes, Juliana loves Günter as heartily as I do, if not more than I, and he also loves her very much; there is still mingled with his affection for her something like reverence. Had I not recovered, he would doubtless have chosen her to be his wife. I, I am responsible for Juliana's sorrow of heart, and I cannot comprehend how Günter preferred me, such a childish thing. Perhaps I showed him too plainly how dear he was to me, whilst Juliana understood how to conceal her love, thus causing him to believe that his warm affection for her awakened no response in her heart. Ah, if it were not wrong to find fault with God's arrangements, I could almost wish that my sufferings had not ceased. Ellen would then have had a mother to whom she would be more devoted."

Thus she thought, and then suddenly a feeling of anguish took possession of her; she almost murmured against God, despite her child-like faith, because He had so disposed affairs, that Juliana was unhappy while she herself was happy. Her train of thought was interrupted by a severe pain in her foot. She was compelled to sit down on a heap of stones. "O, what would I not give not to have seen this French governess. But now it cannot be altered. I cannot give myself up to my happiness with all my heart." She broke into a convulsive sob and buried her face in both her hands.

A sharp flash of lightning and raindrops falling on her hand caused Walli to rise from her rude seat. The sky was thickly covered with heavy storm clouds. A whirlwind passed through the trees. The thunder

rolled. It grew so dark that she could only with difficulty distinguish objects a short distance away. She did not fear the storm, but the sudden rain descending in a heavy stream, against which she had no protection, reminded her of her foolishness in undertaking to walk such a long distance. In her overheated condition, the cold bath would prove doubly dangerous. She sought for a place of shelter, but in vain. She could not stand upon her foot and sank with a groan upon the pile of stones. She was already wet through and through, a shudder passed through her body. The warning of the physician at Meran occurred to her; she should guard carefully against becoming overheated and against cooling off rapidly, if she wished to prevent a return of her former troubles. "I know that I shall be sick again, and through my own fault," she sadly whispered. "Ah, how sorry Günter will be. How I shall destroy his day's joy and that of Juliana. But perhaps it is for the best, who knows—"

A flash of lightning, a fearful crash of thunder cut off further words; everything grew confused and dark before her eyes; her head fell back on the stones, she had swooned.

When she recovered consciousness, she discovered that she was being carried by strong arms; when she opened her eyes she saw that it was Günter that carried her. She smiled happily, as would a child that had been lost, but now lay securely upon its mother's breast. Günter, in a tone that betrayed his fearful anguish, exclaimed: "She lives!" Then he pressed the sweet burden more firmly and imprinted a kiss upon Walli's lips. Juliana, drawing near, said in a tone of deepest joy: "God be praised!"

Overpowered by fatigue and by her violent pain, Walli closed her eyes again and remained in a dreamy state, now and then lifting her eyelids as if to assure herself that Günter was still near. Once she whispered:

"One who has such eyes cannot break his word, can he, Walter?"

Günter asked: "Are you in a fever, Walli, or are you dreaming?"

"Neither," she replied, smilingly; "I was just thinking . . ."

The inn had by this time been reached. Walli was at once carried to a room and laid on a bed. Günter then commended his precious burden to the care of Juliana and the hostess. After they had removed her clothing, rubbed her numb limbs and given her hot tea to drink, she felt so much better that it was deemed advisable to remove her in a closed carriage to her home. Wrapped in a coat and a cape of the stout hostess, Walli was borne out to the carriage and laid on pillows. She assured them all that she felt quite comfortable. Juliana sat beside her, Günter and Ellen occupied the other seat. The horses were driven as rapidly as they could go. All the members of the party were, however, far less cheerful than when they set out upon their trip in the morning. Günter especially, was oppressed with fears, as though he had a foreboding of a far more terrible storm than the one which he had that day experienced.

The following day showed that this foreboding was not groundless. Fever had made its appearance during the night, and Walli was out of her head by morning. The physician, who had been called at once, shook his gray head. Following Juliana into the adjoining room, where Günter was seated, he said:

"This is not a relapse into her former illness, but a nervous fever. I fear that her constitution is too delicate to resist the disease. Nevertheless, we will hope for the best," he hastily added, as he saw Günter's face, which wore an expression of the most fearful anguish.

"The doctors are not omniscient, as is generally

known, and have often made remarkable mistakes. Many a patient, of whose life we have despaired, is well and hearty today. Good nursing can accomplish wonders, and who understands this art better than Fräulein Juliana?" he said encouragingly.

"There shall be no lack of good nursing," replied Juliana. "But another power must assist, if the result of care and medicine is to be a favorable one."

"I know, I know what you mean by 'another power,' " said the physician, in a tone of friendly irony; "I have no objections to offer, since the resigned and believing soul is of far more worth to us in the sick chamber than the doubting, helpless people who worry and lament and make the soul's last conflict the more difficult. And if you can, with your praying—for that is what you mean—win our Walli back to life and health, then will I gladly, with my scientific knowledge, yield to you the field and let you have all the honor."

He did not know how his words destroyed all hope in Günter. He departed with the promise that he would return in the course of the day. Walli's illness took a favorable turn and seemed to set at naught the physician's fears. Günter and Juliana felt relieved, they were hopeful. But not long. The apparent improvement proved to be deceptive. Notwithstanding all the medicine and all the nourishment, Walli's strength did not return. When a violent cough made its appearance, the old physician declared that the nervous trouble had turned into consumption, to which Walli would soon succumb. Had it not been for this turn to the disease, Walli might have lived at least a year longer.

Günter was almost annihilated by this opinion. It seemed as though the iron out of which this man was formed had been broken by one blow. He changed suddenly, fearfully. The warm, reviving

sunlight concealed itself a second time for him. Winter, cold, stark winter, reigned in his soul. Juliana's pain was not less than his. She was losing in Walli a child. With a mother's love had she embraced Walli. But even now she showed herself strong, even in this severe trial she was a living witness of the power of faith and an example of the most exalted self-denial.

Walli could leave her bed every day for several hours, which she spent on the sofa. Günter would daily carry the delicate form, continually growing lighter, into the sitting-room and tenderly lay her in the pillows. Walli rewarded her two faithful attendants with her sweet smile and in cheerful tone, stroking the sofa pillows the while, would say:

"My dear friend, you old piece of furniture, here you have me again, as weak as ever," and then she would talk of her restoration to health, and would tell Günter of a plan which she had thought out to celebrate her complete recovery; they would make the same trip again, upon which the unhappy incidents before described had occurred. She would not, the second time, be so foolish, but would spend every moment at his side.

One could now observe the great change which the illness had wrought, the distortion of the beautiful features, the gradual shrinking of the body, and the "red roses," which consumption calls forth upon the cheeks. Günter caused the sitting-room to be transformed into a garden. Various plants and flowers, such as palms, though none that gave out a strong fragrance, were tastefully placed about the room. Suddenly brought from the bare sick-room into this Eden, Walli exhibited surprise and rapture and expressed her gratitude.

"O, it is not hard to be sick when one is nursed with such love," she exclaimed. "I would not murmur if I were compelled to wait a long time on returning

health, were it not for your sakes. You look so serious, Walter," she said, with a searching look into his face. "I see that you have grown pale and haggard. How dear and precious I must be to you!"

Günter needed all his moral power in order to fight down the nameless agony of his soul. He could not fully conquer his feelings. His voice trembled as he replied: "Not only your sickness, dear one, but rather the terror of the moment when I beheld you lying motionless on the stone heap, may be the cause of my wretched appearance. I believed that you were dead, struck by lightning. In that moment I suffered the greatest agony that can fill a human soul. Such moments leave their traces on the countenance and the soul, the spirit suffers for a long time after, as does the body from a deep wound, even after this has healed."

"You poor, poor Walter," cried Walli tenderly. "How much sorrow I have brought you by my foolishness, how I brought gloom for you and me upon that beautiful birthday. O, forgive, forgive me! See, my beloved, on that day I gave the proof that I am an irresponsible child, deserving punishment in order that thereby I may be made wiser. Let us consider the brief period of illness from this point of view, then the chastening will not seem to us to be so severe, it will even appear wholesome. And now, Walter, will you not be happy again, show me your dear face as I have been accustomed to see it, that I may have no further occasion to reproach you? Ah, you cause me terrible pain."

From that day forward Günter was not absent an hour from Walli's side; she remained from morning until night in her Eden, as she called the sitting-room. He came early and went late. Although he had many a severe struggle with himself, yet he remained composed and always had a cheerful counte-

nance. He cherished but one wish, one hope: that Walli's last days might be free from all pain. Therefore he put forth every effort to smooth the road to death for her as much as possible. His thoughtfulness and tenderness did not for one moment forsake him and extended to the smallest details, which are so inexpressibly sweet to a woman, and which prove more quickening to the sick than all the nourishment and all the medicine that can be given. It seemed as though Günter had gathered all his strength and concentrated it upon the one object: to prepare an Eden for Walli here on earth, at least to give her a foretaste of the Paradise that awaited her.

After a few days, as is so often the case in this sickness, a change for the better took place. Youth, love and faithful care seemed to have conquered death, and hope which so rapidly rises within the human breast, which the heart grasps as the drowning man clings to a straw, once more filled Günter's heart.

One day Walli, after a sleepless night, had not been conveyed to her sofa-bed until noon, and almost immediately fell into a swoon. Ellen, who was home, for the first time since Walli's illness, from a boarding-school, to which she had been sent at once after the accident to Walli, cried aloud and fled to Juliana, while Günter bathed Walli's brow. Ellen, greatly excited and crying, hid her little head in the folds of Juliana's dress, and exclaimed: "O, she looks just as did my mamma in her casket, and now what Hannah said has come true." Juliana, observing that Walli was regaining consciousness, hastily pressed her hand on Ellen's lips; but it was too late. Walli seemed to have heard the last words. She lifted herself up and, with the smile of an angel, beckoned to Ellen to approach. At the same time she requested Günter and Juliana to leave her alone with the child for a few minutes. Günter immediately com-

plied with her request; Juliana, however, departed with visible reluctance.

Ellen drew near somewhat shyly to Walli, who at this moment appeared most lovely. She seemed like an angel, visiting the earth for a brief period, but now preparing to lay aside the earthly form in order to return home. Walli gave the child her hand and said:

"Ellen, I shall now leave you. When I am in heaven you will not forget me wholly, and will be strong and brave and love your father with increased tenderness and be obedient to Juliana?"

"Will Juliana be my mamma when you go to heaven?" asked Ellen.

"If God wills it, yes," replied Walli.

"O, then nothing will come of it; it will turn out as it did the first time," said Ellen, with a pouting expression of countenance.

"The first time?" Walli asked in amazement. "Was Juliana ever to have become your mamma?"

"Yes, certainly. And O, I wished it so much. But -- I dare say nothing, Juliana forbade me. She said that it would break your heart."

Walli smiled. It was the smile of one whose soul has done with earth's sufferings and earth's joys, is lifted up above all things, has conquered. "Only tell me, my heart will soon break at any rate — in death." And thereupon Ellen related everything that she knew, and concluded by saying that Juliana would not become her mamma because, as she said, it was not God's will and because her papa loved Walli more than Juliana.

Walli now had the key to the riddle: the sacrifice which Juliana had made now lay clear before her. She laid her small, white hand in blessing on the child's head, feeling that it was the last time.

The child seemed to understand and said: "When you are in heaven I will carry to your grave the

flowers which you love so well." Walli nodded, she could not speak, then motioned for Ellen to go; she felt that one of her coughing spells was coming on and she wished the child to have no terrible image of her by which to remember her. Without delay and visibly glad, the child flew out of the door like a bird released from its cage. The cough came on with unusual violence. When Günter saw the pale lips flecked with blood he hurried to summon a physician. When Walli recovered somewhat from her exhaustion and opened her eyes, she saw Juliana, who, with weeping eyes, knelt at her bedside.

"Poor Juliana," Walli whispered, stroking Juliana's cheeks. "You are crying for me, because I must leave you. You have concealed your suffering from me. But I have known for a long time what the end would be. Let us not try to deceive each other any longer. Let us speak frankly about my approaching death. Do not hide your pain, dear aunt, weep for me; or rather, weep not: you know that death will only separate us for a short time, that I am only preceding you to our eternal home. And —I know everything, everything that you have done for me. You will find a substitute for me in the love of Walter and Ellen. And in your faith you will find strength to conquer your pain at my loss. Let me speak, do not interrupt me," she said quickly. "Poor Walter, not having this faith, will be bowed down more deeply: I can see how he suffers. O Juliana, be his support and comfort; lift him up if his sorrow becomes too heavy." Her voice was growing weaker. "Do not a second time refuse him should he ask for your hand. Promise me; this will make death more easy."

Juliana's self-control was exhausted. With loud sobs she fell on Walli's breast and on Walli's cold hands the hot tears fell. Walli threw her hands about Juliana's neck and said:

"God would not accept your sacrifice, you good and noble woman. We were all short-sighted. Everything will yet turn out well. When your sorrowing is ended you will have happy, beautiful days. Now, I have two requests to make of you, Juliana. I wish this ring to go to Leonore," taking from her finger a small gold band surmounted by a blue-stone, and handing it to Juliana. It was a confirmation gift from my blessed mother. My Bible I intend for Gertrude. Send these tokens to my dear sisters with a thousand greetings and blessings. My second request is: "Let not Walter witness my last struggles. It would be so hard," she sighed. "It would pain him so fearfully. Hark! that is his step," she exclaimed, as if filled with new life. "Aunt, will you leave us alone for a short time? I have important matters to discuss with him and wish to do this now, while I still have the strength."

Juliana thereupon left the room. Günter almost immediately afterward entered. Walli greeted him with a pleasant smile and with that tenderness which we manifest towards our loved ones when we are about to separate from them.

"I feel so well, so strong," Walli said brightly. "I have been longing to see you and could hardly await your coming. All these days I have made great demands on your patience and kindness. To-day let us spend an hour in happy conversation."

"Will not speaking be too great a strain for you? The physician always recommends rest, rest!" Günter tenderly said.

"The tyrant!" said Walli, with an attempt at humor. "Ah, these few days he might grant me some freedom. I shall soon find rest—in the grave," she added earnestly.

"Walli," cried Günter, in a tone expressive of deepest anguish, "Do not talk so, you will not, you shall not die."

"And yet, Walter, my best and dearest friend, I shall, I must, die. I knew it long since, even as you did," she proceeded calmly. "From now on do not try to disguise the matter in my presence. I just told Juliana of this. Do not attempt, henceforth, to appear cheerful and hopeful in my presence, when your soul is filled with sorrow. Do not try to turn my thoughts away from death. I would rather conclude my relations with the world and thus take away the sting when the final separation must occur. O, do not look so despairing. Let us forget that we are mortal and consider that this life is but a short portion of our existence, let us regard death as only a short absence. You believe, thanks to God, in the soul's immortality, my dear one, in a reunion in the heavenly habitations. What joy this vision gives! How comfortless you would be if you thought that, with my last sigh, my soul had died, and we had parted to meet no more. Not even will all earthly joys fade with my departure. You still have Ellen and the faithful Juliana. I have thought many a time, and the thought has ripened into conviction, that — that I was too much of a child and far too inexperienced to fulfill properly the duties of wife and mother. You would certainly have learned this in a short time, as David Copperfield learned it. I am the counterpart of Dora, I should have been just such a child-wife. God discovered the best way to dissolve this unequal union in that he called Dora home. In His wisdom He is calling me also to that home above. Would it not be a sin for me to murmur and to rebel against Him?" She laid her white, thin hand on Günter's bowed head and in a solemn tone continued: "Another, dear Walter, more worthy than I, will take my place, the place which belongs to her, the place which she, in her nobility of soul, gave up to me. O, I know everything; your little child betrayed it to the large child," she smiled amid her

tears. "I fervently entreat you, Walter, to fulfill Ellen's warmest desire, satisfy her intense longing, make Juliana her mother. And do this soon. Do not take into account your mourning for me or be restrained by custom — that would be foolish. The certainty that you will wed Juliana removes a heavy burden from my soul. Without Juliana the world would become a desert to you: with Juliana, the world will resemble a lovely, sunlit oasis. And now —" she paused a moment — "I have a question to ask you. I would not have asked it had I lived. But I should not wish to die without having cleared up a matter that has greatly concerned me. I do not doubt that you can, in a single word, satisfy me on this point. I hope that you will not consider it indiscreet in me to ask concerning the promise that Jane requested of you and which you gave her before her death?"

Günter hastily lifted his head. "Walli, whence do you know aught of what no human ear heard when Jane and I conversed upon this subject?" he asked, amazed.

"It came to my knowledge. How? Let that remain my secret," Walli pleaded. "It would do no good were I to tell you the source whence I had this knowledge. Perhaps — I dreamed it!"

Günter thoughtfully shook his head, then said: "I will not insist that you name the source of your information, if you think it best to keep this secret. As you supposed, I can easily dispose of this question." He drew a small portfolio from the pocket of his coat and took from it a letter. "See, this letter, written by my beloved Jane, has not left its place over my breast for a minute. It contains her last will, written a few hours before her death. Read it yourself, child," he concluded in a kind tone, handing Walli the paper.

"Read it to me, Walter," begged Walli, refusing to accept the letter. "It would seem to be like an

act of desecration for other eyes than yours to behold this last written word of your wife. Let no other hands than yours touch it."

Günter's eye rested for a while on the delicate, somewhat dimmed words penned by his wife. Ah, the comfortless fact forced itself upon him in all its anguishing bitterness that his first love mouldered in the grave and that the sweet creature in which his heart had hoped to find a refuge and shelter, his second love — lay dying before him and would shortly be torn from his side. Only by an iron will-power did he subdue his agony of soul sufficiently to read the letter. It was as follows:

"Dear Walter:—I asked you to be true to me beyond the grave and never to give Ellen a stepmother. With the approach of death I recognize the unpardonable selfishness that dictated this desire and at the same time the whole extent and importance of such a promise — which, you, good, dear man, most cheerfully made — becomes clear to me. I not only recall my request, which, as I well know, was held sacred by you and which you would never have forgotten, but I even make another request of you: seek out a faithful, noble, womanly heart, one who will help you to conquer the pain which my loss will occasion you, one who will give my dear child a mother's love. God guide you to such a woman. From heaven I will give your union my blessing.

"Your Jane."

"Ah, Walter, what a noble heart you lost in Jane," said Walli, with a glance of the deepest sympathy.

"And how much do I lose in you," cried Günter, in whose breast homesickness for the wife that he had lost and pain at the sight of the dying Walli so increased his anguish that he lost his self-control.

Falling on his knees, he cried: "O, Walli, my blessing, my light, do not leave me!"

He was like a man whose heart was broken. Great tears rolled down over his sunken cheeks, he put his arms about Walli and buried his head in her bosom. Walli trembled for fear as she saw and heard the evidence of this awful pain of soul. But she controlled herself and said in a composed tone: "What, my strong Walter, can you no longer master yourself? Shall I, child that I am, surpass you, the strong man, in strength of soul? Where is your former heroic courage? Let us leave despair to those who believe in no future, in no reunion beyond the grave; let us show by our resignation that we enjoy divine grace and pardon, that the grave is not the home of eternal annihilation, but the portal to our true, eternal home. Lift up your head, dear Walter, look at me with a smiling face. And now accept my thanks for the numberless proofs of your kindness and love by which you made for me even here on earth an Eden."

At these words she laid her cheek on his, her tears mingled with those of the beloved Günter. Suddenly he felt that the light form rested more heavily upon his shoulder. When he called Walli in the most endearing terms and received no answer, a nameless agony seized him. He called Juliana, who came immediately. She assured him that it was only one of the frequent swoons to which Walli had been subject.

Walli soon recovered consciousness, but was unable to speak. She was completely exhausted. After the old and faithful Margaret had helped her to bed and she had taken a spoonful of champagne, kind nature gave her relief in sleep.

Günter sank into the place which Walli had just vacated. His heart was as if turned to stone. But his imagination was busy: he pictured to himself the

awful moment which evidently was now rapidly approaching, Walli's departure from the earth.

Thus he sat, hours passed, he gave no heed to time's flight. Twilight had begun to throw dark shadows over the earth and over the small sitting-room. Günter was completely oblivious to the outside world. He did not hear when the door of the bed-chamber opened and Juliana entered. Only when she gently laid her hand on his arm did he take notice of his surroundings, but then, like one awakened out of a deep sleep, he rose confused. His eye met the deathly-pale, tear-bedewed countenance of Juliana, upon which fell the bright light of a candle which she held in her hand.

"Is she dying, is she dying?" cried Günter as one frenzied.

"She has gone home, she has gone to sleep without a struggle," said Juliana softly, in a trembling tone. "Come with me to her."

CHAPTER IX.

FROM LEONORE'S JOURNAL.

Baden-Baden, July 28.

I am seated on a veranda. Laurel, orange and citron trees grow here; I see them on every hand. The sweet, spicy air from the fir-forests gently caresses me. My delighted eyes rest on the gray castle ruins, or on the mountains towering in the west, or on the Rhine, that glistens like a silver girdle in the distance. Nature smiles upon me. But a short time ago I returned her smiles with cold, dark glances. But now my soul opens once more to receive life's joys as the flower's

cup unfolds to the kiss of the reviving sun. The hopeless night of my soul lightens. I venture to grant entrance to hope. The bloody pictures of the past, that persecuted me in my waking hours and disturbed my slumber, are dimmed. The pale face of the man to whom I had been married but one hour, and who made me a widow in defending my honor with his life against my slanderer, who slew my husband, no longer dwells continually in my mind. Nevertheless I devote many hours of loving thought to him, for he deserves this. He proved himself a noble man. His memory shall ever be held in high esteem by me. His last will and testament, in which he settled all his wealth on me, is one proof of his ardent love. I did not accept a single sou of this fortune from the hands of the woman who accused me of the murder of her son, and threw all the guilt and the responsibility for his death on my shoulders, and who gave me plainly to understand that she had suppressed her deep aversion for me only until I should become her son's wife, and should be in her power. I find ample compensation in my present position for all the evils and all the bitter experiences that I have suffered. The storms seem to have ceased their raging, my skiff glides gently on the blue, rocking waves of the clear waters.

Rest, all-embracing,
Enters now my soul.
All the inner discord o'er,
Peace now dwells within.

I am indebted to a happy accident for my present lot. My trusted friend and adviser, Amelia, who has completely won the heart of her countess, whose reliance, comfort and friend she is, counselled me not to accept this position, and sought to persuade me to enter the family of an old general who had retired to private life, and who was in search of a companion for his

sixteen-year-old granddaughter. Amelia thought that this house would afford me protection against all slander and persecution. But I followed the prompting of my heart and became the traveling companion of a certain Marquise de Brinville, against whom Amelia felt prejudiced because she was an unknown woman and nobody in Paris knew anything certain about her antecedents. My marquise, however, is one of the most loveable and charming women under the sun. I am her friend, not her subordinate; she does not by a single word remind me of my dependent position. This is the best proof of true nobility of soul. After a delightful trip through southern France, we came hither. This was fourteen days ago. The marquise is like a child, free from care, that runs through forest and field, plucking in passing the blossom and flower. She is past the period of youth, but she excites universal attention and admiration. The men flock about her as moths gather to the light. At our appearance upon the promenade all glasses are at once directed upon her. She loves homage, which has become a necessity to her. She tells me that she has ever been a star in the circles in which she moved and has been accustomed to the homage of men. But in this one respect I differ from her; to the flattery of the men who have thus entrapped many a maiden's heart, I oppose a cold, proud indifference. The marquise does not approve of my conduct, although she does not directly express herself to that effect. One of the young men who pay me marked attention, has excited my interest, because he is so different from the other young elegants. He is the Vicomte de Lusignan. He is a beautiful man. From under his high, marble forehead, deep, black, melancholy eyes appear. The outline of his face is faultlessly chaste, his movements and gestures are unusually elegant, his whole carriage proves him aristocratic. He does not give expression to his feelings in flowery language, in threadbare platitudes; no, towards me he

observes a fine reserve, his glowing looks alone interpret the feelings of his heart.

They say that in him the old saying is again verified: "He came, he saw, he conquered." The other ladies—some of them famous beauties—seem so much air to him. He has eyes for me only. We are already objects of general remark, an approaching engagement is talked of, as the marquise today informed me She advised me to play the part of a coquette with the count, who was deeply in love mith me, and so to hasten him to a declaration of love. These words, which displeased me, would have aroused me against her did I not so heartily love her. As it is, I pardon her. She is a genuine child of the world, one must not measure those of her class with the small, strict rule of common principles. I will, however, not permit her a glance into my soul, although I have resolved to become viscountess. Nobody shall say of me that the victory over my heart was easily gained by this man. My principle, not to bestow my hand without my heart, is rendered untenable by circumstances. I have been forced to give up the idea that it would be wrong to do this. For my heart is dead and shall so remain; its happiness ended for all time with the dissolution of my engagement. The sweet first dream of love can be dreamed but once. The chief thing now is to wrest from life what it has to offer in outward treasures: rank and riches.

What excitement the news of my third engagement will cause at home! My uncle and my aunt in Berlin will be pleased, since it is their wish that I carry a coronet on my handkerchiefs. Juliana will regard the matter differently. She must, however, concede that I have accomplished what, according to her statement, I set out all too boldly to undertake, and that my watchword: "By my own might," has been approved. Despite all storms, hindrances and sufferings, I am nearing a glorious goal! Since the tragic end of my

husband I have left those at home in complete ignorance of my doings. And, of course, no word from them has come to me; therefore, I am often heavy of heart. I was too proud or—too cowardly to acknowledge the torments of soul which I endured. I, on this account, kept silence, awaiting the time when I should be able to report good news.

The preparations for a theatrical representation have so fully occupied my attention that my journal suffered neglect. This play will be held in one of the halls of the city. The part of the heroine Juliet has been asigned to me; the viscount will play the part of Romeo. Even in the rehearsals I have won stormy applause. From all sides I have been assured that I am an artist and no dilettante.

Thursday Night, August 15.

I returned half an hour since from the play. Although tired and exhausted both from the part which I took and from the excitement of the triumph that I had, nevertheless I must make a record in my journal.

I am as one intoxicated. Never yet have I been adored as on this occasion. My heart beats wildly as the memory of the evening's triumph comes back to me.

The marquise has just left me. She kissed me on the forehead and could not find words enough to tell me how charmingly I played, how all the world would be full of my praise. She informed me that the viscount, enraptured with my appearance in the play, had spoken words which indicated that he would very shortly ask for my hand. She gave him to understand that he need have no fear of a refusal. I have just looked into the mirror to study myself in the costume of Juliet. Strange! Suddenly, as one surfeited, I turned my back on the mirror and now I am again seated at my writing table. An hour ago carried away by the

stormy, almost never-ending applause, I suddenly feel a weariness of soul, an emptiness, dissatisfaction, well-nigh disgust. I am a riddle to myself. Will my soul never grow calm, will the tide go on changing forever, even now when I possess everything that I can desire? The image of my mother now appears so often before my mind's eye. Her dear eyes are so full of admonition and of warning, as if she would say: "Is this libel on life the object of our existence? Is this vain, flawless voyaging upon the sea of pleasure worthy of an immortal soul? Does my child find satisfaction therein?"

Ah, tonight this voice rang again in my ear. I heard it above the multitude's applause. But am I doing something wicked? Does my soul suffer? Is my higher, better nature injured? Are not my principles as firm as ever? Yes, my principles seem to be unimpaired. But will they remain so in the whirlpool of this worldly life, at the side of a man about whose character I know so little? Will not the poisonous plants of worldly pleasure and worldy love choke the better desires of my soul?

As Leonore, laying down her pen, leaned back thoughtfully in her chair, her eye fell on a letter which she had not observed before. Astonished, with a vague feeling of uneasiness, and yet with the joyous hope that perhaps the note contained an offer of marriage from the viscount, she hastily opened it. She read "A friend is near at hand and has been watching you as you glide along so smoothly upon the slippery pathway in the house of the marquise. It is high time that you leave this house, in whose atmosphere you, with your pure heart, do not belong. To tarry longer where you are may injure your reputation. Remember the poet's admonition:

"A flower there is
Which but a single frost will kill;

A jewel, which but once
The Master's skill did form.
And lo! 'tis one's good name."

A family, well-known to you—Professor Pirrer and wife—arrived yesterday and will remain here some time. Their house is open to you at any hour. Do not neglect to seek this asylum. A slip of paper, containing the address, is inclosed. Do not doubt the writer's honesty and honorableness because he is under the necessity of writing anonymously."

Leonore was dumbfounded. The letter fell from her hand. She suddenly looked into a yawning abyss, where before she had walked on roses. She felt as though she must choke. But soon her features underwent a transformation. The expression of terror yielded to that of scorn, the firmly, compressed lips curled, the beautiful head was thrown back proudly, her eye had an almost threatening expression, as if she saw her protector before her. Then, taking the letter from the floor, she stepped out upon the veranda and spoke in audible tone of contempt, the while she tore the letter and scattered the small pieces to the winds: "That is my answer to thy warning, my unknown and would-be protector! A true friend does not approach under such a disguise. Instead of following the advice to leave this house and my best and noblest friend, I will remain here and tomorrow night, in defiance of thee, will celebrate new triumphs on the 'slippery pathway.' Moreover," she whispered with gleaming eye, "the time for decision is near at hand. Tomorrow, according to the prophecy of the marquise, the viscount will offer me his hand and heart. The festal evening is to be concluded in a brilliant manner by our betrothal. Then I shall have a protector for all time! Farewell, Oscar!" she tremblingly whispered, while tears dimmed her eyes. "Despite everything, I am not happy. I was so but once, and shall be so never, never again. Never!"

The home of the Marquise de Brinville had been filled today again with an elegant company. Artists, beauties, and the lions of this celebrated city were, at the suggestion of the humane, tender-hearted marquise, engaged in a work of charity: to furnish a pair of lovers from the working class who had exhibited touching fidelity to each other, with a sufficient sum of money to start housekeeping. One of the numbers on the programme was a scene from Hamlet, with Leonore as Ophelia. Leonore had again given convincing evidence of her artistic merit. Her success on this occasion far surpassed whatever triumph she had achieved on former occasions. Leonore, filled with the spirit of her role, carried away with the subject which she sought to depict, had eyes for no one in the audience, only now and then would her gaze linger upon the upturned face of the count, who leaned against a pillar near the stage. She had purposely permitted him to infer, from her glance, that he might hope. The joyous light in his eye, visible to her only, she had interpreted as the indication of a heart jubilant over its victory.

Exhausted, and yet excited, Leonore, immediately after the close of the play, instead of entering the drawing-room to hear her praise spoken on every hand, retired by a side door and entered the hot-house. Beside a gently splashing fountain, behind a thick group of plants and orange trees she sought a retired spot where, completely isolated from the outward world, her feelings might gradually be allayed and she might collect herself for the moment, of whose rapid approach the mute language of the viscount's eye had given her announcement. She pressed some of the cooling leaves against her forehead; her head sank; her eyes closed. A sound of distant steps and voices aroused her from her dreaming. She heard the well-known voice of the viscount. She listened, breathless, motionless. She had not been mistaken, the viscount was drawing near

with another gentleman. They seated themselves but a short distance from the place where Leonore sat unobserved.

"Ah," exclaimed the viscount with a sigh, "what a blessing to escape from the heavy atmosphere of those rooms. I am completely exhausted."

"Ophelia is responsible for that," banteringly the reply came in a tired, nasal tone. "But, on my word of honor, that Leonore was ravishing. She had about her something demoniac, and yet angelic. I have seldom seen such a perfect womanly form, and I have traveled far. Did I not know that she was already engaged to you I would appear as your rival and immediately make her a declaration of love. But, as it is, I will not encroach upon your dominions."

The viscount did not reply. The other, less tired and quite loquacious, proceeded.

"Apropos, dear friend, may I ask when you will send out your engagement cards? Everybody is talking about your relation to the lady. Why delay, why keep us on the rack? Your engagement will give rise to fresh festivities and will break the monotony of life."

"You are in an ironical mood today, my friend," responded the viscount lazily, with an audible yawn. "But pray, let me rest, spare me such silly talk. I am tired to death, you make me feel worse. Think! Three nights at the gaming table! Thirty thousand francs lost! An empty purse and no hope of a new supply! That is sufficient to banish thoughts of love. Besides, your observation about an engagement can be but a jest. You know my views too well to regard me capable of such foolishness."

"I know them as well as I know my pocket-book," answered the other. "But I thought that perhaps you had lost your reason as well as your heart. It is a well known fact that we can restrain love as little as Phaethon could control the chariot of the sun. The

faultless beauty of this German girl would count for something. In my opinion, this Leonore would famously represent a viscountess and evidently far more acceptably than a mere worldly woman!" laughed the speaker.

"Oh, well, try for her hand," the viscount said with some impatience. "Make her Countess Salandier. I will not stand in your way."

"Thank you, my best friend. My adoration does not reach to the point of marriage. I could close my eyes to the fact that the maiden has no title: I need money. One can not eat himself full on ancestors and titles, and these are the portion given to the second-born."

"And I am in the same case, as you well know. I must look about for a large dowry, until my dear uncle does me the favor to close his eyes and make me his heir. This fortunate moment may, alas, be long delayed. Should I suggest to this aristocratic uncle that I would introduce a plain, untitled woman into his castle as its mistress, he would either send me to the insane asylum or disinherit me. But I have no idea of exposing myself to any such disagreeable eventualities and to destroy my life's happiness for the sake of a temporary passion. The girl pleases me, that I will not deny: my heart it not even wholly free from a warmer feeling. At first it was only wounded vanity that urged me to pay her my devotion. Otherwise she would not, among the countless beauties from noble houses, have attracted my attention; besides, I have no special weakness for governesses and similar creatures. I heard that she was reserved, inapproachable, a young woman without a heart. She was reported to have said, when warned against me, that her heart was proof against the love of man, therefore against me also. I soon saw, however, that she was an extraordinary girl, that she possessed true womanly pride, that she was not a designing coquette, and that noth-

ing could be accomplished with her through the ordinary methods of paying court. For this reason I sought victory in another way. And lo! my tactics proved successful. She was entrapped, although I must confess, that it required a long time. Not until this evening did I draw from those deep, soulful, and yet cold, proud eyes, the first glance of promise and surrender. The ice of her heart seems to have melted, she confidently hopes for a declaration on my part. I am truly sorry that I must deceive her. Hitherto a girl's broken heart caused me no scruples, but I feel something like compassion for this Leonore. She is an exception among those of her sex, she has noble principles. This she has shown in her dangerous position of companion to this old arch-coquette, this frivolous, so-called marquise —"

"So-called marquise," the count interrupted in an astonished tone. "What do you mean by that?"

"Ah, my dear friend, let us first moisten our lips with a glass of wine; upon my word, I am no longer able to speak."

"No, no, you must first explain to me your mysterious allusion. Before you have done this you can not escape me."

"Oh, well, tormenting spirit," said the viscount with a yawn. "Know then, that this marquise, whose suppers have so excellent a taste, in whose salon we waste so much time in a most agreeable way, was once a star of the fifth magnitude in the renowned circus L—, but is now a hired spy of the Paris police. She is, to be sure, reported to have been married to an old marquis, whose genealogical tree we must probably seek in the moon, but since his death she has led an adventurous life. Leonore is the decoy-bird by whose extraordinary beauty and refinement the marquise fills her salons."

"Bah," the count interrupted, incredulously

shrugging his shoulders, "those are infamous lies, slanders. Do not believe such myths."

"This is no slander. My authority is too reliable for me to entertain any doubts as to the truthfulness of these reports," rejoined the viscount in a less phlegmatic tone. "A young painter—you know him well by his celebrated painting: Tasso's Leonore, which gained the prize at the exposition—a Berlin man, his name's Welldorf or Wellheim—listen! was not that a woman's cry?"

"A parrot," laughed the count. "That was your woman's voice. Ha, ha!"

"How one can be deceived. I could have sworn that it was a cry of pain, and from a woman," said the viscount thoughtfully. "Where did I leave off? My head is quite confused—ah yes, with the painter Wallheim or Wellheim. He is here at present. I met him at the house of a friend, who knows the history of the marquise down to the smallest detail and who met her several years ago in Nizza, where she played a role. She had a large and well-appointed house, but suddenly disappeared, leaving behind her enormous debts. A bracelet had been sent to her for examination, this she carried off with her. A warrant was issued for her arrest and detectives were put on her track. The cunning adventuress has until now eluded the police. But in a few days she will be arrested and imprisoned, since sufficient evidence is at hand to identify her. That will cause a big sensation, especially among the fashionable ladies who have frequented her house!" laughed the viscount with an air of satisfaction.

"And this Leonore, the intimate friend of the two-faced marquise, will be placed in a bad light," said the count, rising. "Let us now drink our champagne, even though it comes from the cellar of a pretended marquise. Come, my friend."

"No, everything in its proper order," protested the viscount. "We must first of all congratulate

Leonore on her success. The young painter besought me with strange earnestness to speak to her a word of warning. These Germans are curious fellows, full of nobility of heart. But I would prefer not to terrify this innocent creature. She will be able to help herself out of the mire. She possesses energy and character. Let things take their own course." With that they walked away arm in arm.

Let us inquire after Leonore. She had fallen back upon the bank. Her face was pale as that of the dead. There was no movement in her limbs. Her eyes were closed, her arms hung lifeless. Thus she lay for a long time. The body quivered, the eyes slowly opened and gazed about with a wondering expression as if seeking to recognize the surroundings. Suddenly she pressed both hands upon her temples, then quickly rose, brushed the long hair back from her forehead, listened a moment, at last vanishing like an apparition through a side door into the garden and thence up a flight of stairs to her room.

Here she threw herself upon her knees beside her bed, her form was shaken with her sobs, she buried her head in the pillows and in a tone of anguish and despair cried out:

"Oscar, my beloved, thou art near. Could I but find thee. I would gladly serve thee as thy handmaid, I, who am so unworthy of thee because of the blot that rests on my name. O gracious, merciful God, Thou from whom I in foolish blindness have turned away, reach out to me Thy helping hand, restore my despairing soul, have compassion upon me in this awful hour lest I perish."

The preceding weeks passed before her mind's eye. She saw herself, blind, unsuspicioning, travelling a flowery pathway, not observing the vipers beneath the flowers. Overcome by outward appearances, she had been on the verge of destruction. Hot shame made her face glow, because she, for the sake of a coronet,

had been unfaithful to her principle: not to bestow her hand without her heart. She was ashamed of her pitiable condition, she was like one annihilated, like one smitten, bleeding at heart. She shuddered at the low, degraded scene which the raised curtain had just revealed to her view. She was horrified at the frivolity, at the low plane of thought, exhibited by the man to whom she had desired to entrust her life's happiness. At last she rose, tore with feverish haste the wreath from her head, pulled off the white robe, hastily put on a simple black dress, wrapped her head in a black thick veil, and flew out of the door and down the steps. She heard loud laughter and the confused noise of many voices in the dining-hall. She turned away in disgust and hastened her step as if pursued by the Eumenides. A sigh of relief escaped her lips when she found herself in the open air, away from the house of blasphemy. On, on she hurried. No one noticed the black form which silently moved in the shadow of the trees: only two eyes steadily followed her until she disappeared in the dark castle garden. Exhausted in body and soul, she sank down under an old oak and leaned her head against its trunk. The night was clad in royal garb, blue studded with silver stars. The crescent moon rose above the ancient cloister and spread its pale light. Leonore felt the bewitching influence of nature. Night's wondrous calm was like balsam upon the wound of her soul. She felt the breath of God. The wild waves grew still, as of old the storm ceased at the Lord's command. The soft breeze that stirred in the trees lulled her to sleep. When she awoke from a short half-slumber, her eyes fell on the cloister which, illuminated by the moon, stood out from its dark frame of forest-trees.

"Oh that I might flee behind thy protecting walls, that in thy stillness I might find peace for my comfortless heart! My only salvation would be to break loose from this poor life, to bury myself alive, forsaken,

homeless creature that I am. O God, O God, forsake me not, let me not fall into despair nor be driven to the extreme"— she wrung her hands and lifted her burning eyes heavenward. "Send me some one in my need, a helping hand—"

"Leonore!" The sound came like a breath of air. but it reached the ear for which it was intended. Leonore, trembling, hastily turned her head towards the direction from which the sound came. Had a voice or had God spoken this name? She slowly sunk her head, but in doing so her eye saw a man's form not far away. Some one was leaning against the trunk of a tree.

With an exclamation of the greatest ecstacy of which a martyred, but suddenly released, soul is capable, she stretched forth her hands like a helpless child, and quick as thought she felt herself lifted from the ground and the arms of a strong man about her.

All present sorrow was forgotten in the sweet feeling that she was protected against all dangers by Oscar Wellheim. They were once more united, they would never again be parted.

"O, how good is God," whispered Leonore, scarcely capable of speech, "and how kind you are, Oscar, to have sought and rescued me. I thank you, I thank you. You have rescued me from the night of despair. Ah, how precious it is to rest on your breast after all my wanderings. O Oscar, what heart-aches I should have spared both of us had I not foolishly—"

"Let those things rest, my Leonore," said Wellheim in a kind, but firm, tone. "Let no self-accusation, no reproach, cast a shadow on the joy of this moment. Enough that I have found you and that you are still the same, pure, noble, good. I have, in spirit, accompanied you on all your wanderings, never giving up hope until—the day of your marriage. The star of hope was then extinguished for a short period and sank in dark night. God be praised that

the bonds with which you, falsely guided by your feelings, bound yourself were loosed. Come, you are tired, beloved: let us sit on yonder bank." They seated themselves under a neighboring fir-tree.

"When my friends—my secret agents"—Wellheim laughed—"informed me of your departure with the marquise as her companion and indicated Baden as the goal of your journey, I immediately came hither and, since the day of your arrival, I have followed you as your shadow. Since I learned of the antecedents of this woman, I prepared myself to assist you, should any disagreeable circumstances arise. My letter, whose warning the proud Leonore disregarded, was sent in a disguised hand-writing and without a signature because I feared that you might not understand my motive. This evening, when, as my friend informed me, the announcement of your engagement was expected, I was drawn hither with irresistible power. I wanted, at whatever cost, to warn you once more, even against the viscount, who, as I now certainly know, is a conscienceless roué, whose pecuniary circumstances are not such that he can marry a girl without means. I had a second letter, this time with my signature, in my pocket, which I intended to send you through your maid. I do not know what has so fearfully roused your feelings and driven you out into the night, and I do not care to know. God be praised, I was near at hand and could follow you and help you in the moment of your despair. Tell me one thing, Leonore: does your whole heart belong, undivided, to me, or has the good-looking, treacherous viscount—"

"Speak no further," Leonore interrupted, "do not mention him again, this wretch. No, Oscar, my heart had no part in my determination to accept the probable proposal of the viscount. I have not with a single thought or feeling been untrue to you. But," she added with a sigh, "I was weary of my wanderings,

I longed for rest and peace in a home which I could call my own. O Oscar, I know now how to value a home, be it ever so modest: it is a woman's highest treasure. All else is vain, but—I am not worthy now to become your wife, I can not bring you an unblemished name, I can and dare not accept what I formerly cast away."

"No more false pride, Leonore, fall into no further errors. You are now mine," said Oscar firmly. I have won you for myself, I will not again leave you, even if the whole world should rise against you and accuse you. But that is not to be feared. Your sojourn in the house of the marquise will bring no reproach upon you any more than upon all the fine society ladies who have frequented her salons."

"Well, then take me, if you will not leave me. I have at least been tried in the fires of experience, and I can be more to you now since I have passed through this vigorous school. Ah, how truly the poet spoke:

"Life alone can teach each one what he is."

"But whither shall I go now, Oscar?" Leonore asked anxiously. "Where shall I find a place of refuge tonight? I will not return to that house under any circumstances."

"You will find a home with your best friend, Alix," replied Wellheim. "She has been here since day before yesterday, and is awaiting you. She is heartily glad of an opportunity to repay you for the great service that you rendered her. Come, let us go to her now, it is half past ten and high time that we be going."

Leonore yielded. Arm in arm the two took their way to the house where Leonore was to find a place of refuge.

As her betrothed had assured her, so it was. Alix received her as a sister. Leonore's situation was thoroughly considered. Professor Pirrer expressed the

opinion, with which all agreed, that Leonore, in order to avoid scandal and gossip, should, accompanied by Wellheim, return to the house of the marquise, go, unobserved, to her room and remain until the following day, when Professor Pirrer and her betrothed would call for her, at the same time announcing her engagement to the marquise and her departure from the latter's home. Leonore assented willingly to this proposition, and followed the two gentlemen. Everything turned out favorably. Unobserved, Leonore returned by the same way on which she had left. Once within her room she rang the bell. The maid, who responded immediately, exhibited the greatest astonishment at sight of Leonore, who, as she said, had been missed and had been sought for everywhere. Leonore requested the maid to inform the marquise, when she retired, that Leonore had felt too indisposed to mingle with the company.

On the following day Leonore, with a radiant countenance, left the house of the marquise on Oscar's arm. The marquise may have suspected the reason for all this, but her self-composure did not forsake her. Without any change of countenance she dismissed Leonore with undiminished friendliness, warmly congratulated her on her admirable choice, and regretted that she must lose such a congenial companion. On the promenades along which Wellheim purposely took Leonore, they met the viscount and the count. Wellheim greeted the gentlemen in an unembarrassed manner and introduced Leonore as his affianced. The viscount stood speechless, he lost altogether his composure, and the count was equally confused.

A few days later the report of the sudden disappearance of the marquise spread through the city like wild-fire and created immense excitement. The true antecedents of the adventuress were discovered and

furnished fresh fuel for the flame. The ladies who moved in the best society were ashamed and promised themselves that they would henceforth be more cautious and admit nobody to their acquaintance for whose irreproachable descent they did not have the most certain proofs. Many of the merchants wore long faces and drew a line through large accounts in their books. Leonore's gratitude to her betrothed grew in proportion as she realized how much she was indebted to him. What would have become of her, she asked herself, had Oscar not reached to her a rescuing hand. She shuddered at the answer which her soul each time gave. In intercourse with her noble friends she learned to know better the difference betwen tinsel and gold, betwen common glass and precious stones, between true happiness and the empty joys of the world. She beheld in the gentle Alix an example of a loving, faithful wife, who surpassed by far all the elegant ladies of the world, and whose beaming eye bore testimony to peace of soul. Sweet peace gradually entered Leonore's heart also. The eternal vacillation and restless longing for the unattainable ceased; the flames of passion were extinguished, but left a warm glow behind; as the quiet of evening after the busy day, so was it now in her soul.

"I recognize now that the soul which chooses God as guide can never suffer shipwreck," said Leonore, as she sat one evening with her betrothed in her favorite place in the castle garden. "I will endeavor to adjust my life more to the will and plan of God. Walli will serve as a shining example. Meanwhile I will strive to be the most loving and most dutiful wife on earth."

"And with this promise, beloved," replied Oscar,

tenderly drawing her to himself, "you make me the happiest man on earth."

* * * * * *

Summer had again appeared in the land. In Günter's garden we find on a glorious July morning under a shade-tree, Juliana and Ellen, surrounded with baskets of flowers, evergreen and ivy. Both are busily engaged in making a wreath: Juliana arranging and winding the flowers which Ellen hands her. Ellen, in her white dress, was a picture of happiness and health. Juliana's face exhibited pleasure as often as the child skipped and danced past her in order to get flowers from a basket standing behind her. Once Juliana took Ellen by the arm and reproved her for having put a red rose with the adeptness of a sleight-of-hand performer in Juliana's hair. "Don't concern yourself now about foreign matters, darling. You must attend diligently to your present duties," said Juliana, in a tone to which she tried to lend severity, but in vain. "Our guests will find the walls bare and without festal adornment. Hand me that red rose, it matches this white one. Be quick, you little rogue," she added, for Ellen's mischievous countenance betrayed that she had something else in her head. "You know that papa will scold."

Ellen gave a loud laugh. "O scold," cried she, shaking her locks. "Papa never scolds any more. Whatever you do, my mamma, is perfectly satisfactory to him. He will scold most because you rose so early and have scratched your fingers with the thorns, instead of commanding the lazy servants to make the wreaths. O see, there comes papa. Now you will know that I am right." With outspread arms she went to meet Günter, who was visible at the end of one of the garden paths. He picked up the little girl, tossed her high in the air and, carrying her on his

arm, hastened to Juliana, who, with silent rapture, had been witness of the pretty scene.

"Lo, the ever busy, never resting housewife," said Günter. "I am convinced—"

"Papa, she has been busy ever since five o'clock," Ellen interjected, "and her fingers are bleeding, only see."

"Ellen wants to make accusation against me, Walter," Juliana said, smiling. "But it is not so bad as she would have you believe. My hands have not grown disused to work and can do more than twine these wreaths. How do these garlands please you?" she asked her husband, pointing to her floral creations.

"They are beautiful and tasteful, as is everything which your skillful hand produces," replied Günter heartily, with a gallant bow. "But decidedly the most beautiful is the glorious rose in your hair, which you have placed with a true artist's taste."

"I, I, papa," cried Ellen jubilantly, "I put the rose in mamma's hair."

"And have exhibited a questionable talent for playing tricks," Juliana laughingly interrupted, and then bade the child order coffee and urged her to hurry so that papa need not wait long. Ellen flew down the path like a deer. Günter seated himself beside Juliana and, moving a basket of flowers nearer, said:

"Now I will help you dear, although my rough hands are not at home in this sort of work. But I must first communicate the contents of two telegrams that have just arrived. In the one the arrival of Leonore and her husband at noon, today, is announced, in the other, the arrival of Gertrude and Richard, one hour later. We must hurry, if your plans for the decoration of the house are to be carried out."

Juliana in joyful surprise, exclaimed: "O, how

glad I am that they are coming sooner than expected. You must now command the gardener's assistant to help us, if the old gardener can dispense with his services. First of all, Walter, let us gather strength for our work by eating a hearty breakfast. See, it will be served immediately." She rose in haste and laid her arm in that of Günter, which he gallantly offered her.

While they were seated at the breakfast table, the approaching meeting with the young couples was discussed. Günter, in an earnest tone, said: "It pleases me, Juliana, that the young people are coming today. I did not feel altogether satisfied when their arrival was set for tomorrow. I said nothing, however, because Leonore's illness did not seem to permit of an earlier arrival. Today we can, according to the present arrangement, give ourselves up wholly, without any qualms of conscience, to the joy of meeting our dear ones. And tomorrow, as is our sacred duty, we can devote entirely to Walli's blessed memory. The two sisters, whose chief object it no doubt is to celebrate the anniversary of Walli's death beside her grave, probably hastened their journey out of tender regard for our feelings."

"I think that you are right. My heart, too, was in a state of conflict between feelings of joy at seeing again my foster-daughters, and sorrow over the beloved one whom we have lost," said Juliana. "I wished to provide a pleasant reception for our welcome visitors, and yet my feelings rebelled against decorating the house with flowers. Their earlier arrival offers a happy solution of the whole question."

"Do you know, mamma, what I have planned?" asked Ellen, holding a biscuit in her hand. "Day after tomorrow I will, with John's help, carry all the wreaths to Aunt Walli's grave, so that she, up in heaven, can see that I still love her. Do you know,

papa, that since she has gone and has not become my mamma, I love her much, much more."

Günter smiled sadly. "Since she has gone," he murmured, and wiped his eyes. Stroking Ellen's cheek, he said: "Yes, do as you have said. I will go with you. But we will carry other wreaths to Walli's grave, the most costly that the florist's skill can make. I have already ordered them and they will be made of the loved one's favorite flowers."

After the breakfast table had been cleared Juliana again took up her labor of love. Her husband offered to cut and sort the flowers.

"Who would have prophesied a year ago," Juliana thoughtfully began, "that I, as your wife, would be winding wreaths for the reception of my dear girls! How short-sighted are we mortals with respect to the ways of God! How differently things turn out from what we plan, hope, fear! Although my heart has not yet recovered from the pain and sorrow of Walli's death, it is nevertheless filled with praise and gratitude, both on account of my present lot and also on account the peace and happiness that now fill the lives of the two girls. They are no longer homeless, must no longer wander from house to house, each, as the dove finds a nest, has found a home; they are secure in the love of strong, noble men, who, in their letters to us, speak in the highest praise of their wives, and, with Schiller, can say:

'Honor good women, flowers of heaven
They entwine in earth's poor life.'

How I long to hold the two girls in my arms. How glad I shall be that they can make their homes in this city and be near us. How pleasant that Richard will be your partner in the factory, and you—"

"And I shall no longer be an idler? H'm! And there will be an end to dolce far niente? And my time

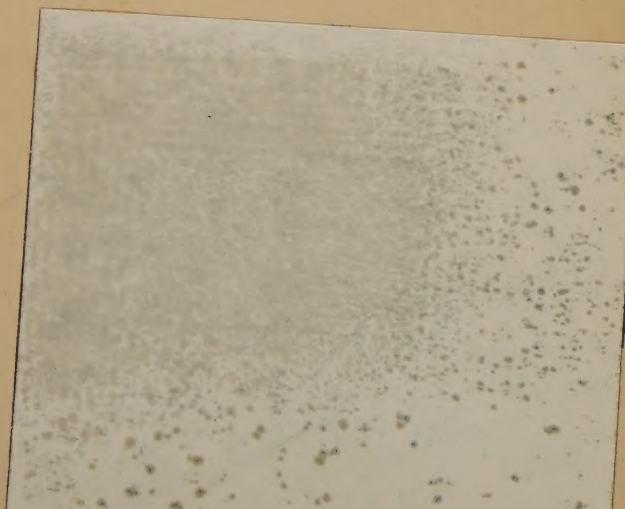
will be regularly occupied? That is what you wanted to say, dearest, is it not?" And Günter smiled with a knowing look. A slight nod of the head and a mischievous smile formed Juliana's answer. In handing her a camellia, he stole a hasty kiss, and continued: You would have made an excellent statesman, Juliana; for, in addition to your gifts as a housewife you possess such clear judgment, such deep insight and such great energy that many a prince would be glad to have you as his counsellor. And then," he proceeded in a gentle tone, "you are an unequalled physician of the soul. You have fully healed the wounds of my soul by inciting me to mental activity. You have interested me in a plan formed by yourself and have given me life again. I am myself again. For all this I am indebted to you. By the way, the workingmen's dwellings, the plans for which cost us so many hours of thought, will be under roof in the course of the following week. So, at least, the builder told me. The work has been highly successful and finds general recognition. We will embrace the opportunity to provide a beautiful celebration for the workingmen. On the festal day I will appoint you protectress of the workingmen's families and chief inspector of the dwellings. This will offer a wide scope for the exercise of your Samaritan spirit, an important office for your—"

"You will make me too proud," Juliana blushingly interrupted. "I will try to prove myself worthy of this trust. The welfare of our workingmen shall always receive my attention and excite my interest."

"Just as you are always interested in the welfare of all men, especially of myself and of our child. O Juliana," continued Günter, while his eye rested with an expression of deep love and emotion upon the noble countenance of his wife, "In the short space of three months since I have been permitted to call you my

wife, you have become an indescribable blessing to me. I loved Walli as only a man's heart can love; but I believe that the dear child was right; you are a more suitable companion for the mature man—"

"Do not say that, Walter," Juliana gently interposed; "for who could with certainty affirm that? We are both inexpressibly happy; that is a blessed fact. But you would certainly have found true, unclouded happiness at Walli's side, even though your joy would have been of another kind. That this was not permitted, that my happiness here on earth has grown out of the death of the dear child, is one of those strange dispensations of the great and all-wise God which we mortals cannot comprehend. Lifting her clear eye to the cloudless ether, her lips softly spoke, as if in prayer:

"Beyond our humble sphere there dwells a God
Whose is the kingdom, glory, power.
In wisdom all things He ordains,
The day, the night, creates, Himself the Light.
Though dark and strange may be the way,
He yet will some day make all clear;
For He is God and faithful watch He ever keeps."

(The End.)